THE MEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS

GEORGE GORDON

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The Men Who Make Our Novels

BY

GEORGE GORDON, pseud.

Baldwin, Charles Crittenton

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. . . . .

In order that this book might be published on schedule time, the chapters on Peter B. Kyne, Zane Grey, Thomas Dixon and Basil King were prepared by Mr. Howard Willard Cook, editor of the *American Writers Series*. There has been no attempt on Mr. Cook's part to make these chapters critical. They are presentations of biographical fact. The authors either were in Europe, engaged in war work, or in some way inaccessible to Mr. Gordon. These chapters embody Mr. Cook's idea of presentation, rather than criticism in the series.

IN LIEU OF A PREFACE

"All books should have a preface, to tell what they are about and why they were written," says Mr. Arthur Bullard, in the opening sentence of his first novel, *A Man's World;* continuing, "This book is about myself."

As is usual with books and prefaces alike, since no man can escape the prison of his personality to view the world with any eyes but his own; we cannot, like that Tiresias cited by Monsieur France, be men and at the same time have memories of having been women.

The present volume, presumably dealing with certain of those who make novels, was written on demand, and is, for the most part, concerned with the life and opinions of George Gordon. For this reason, despite Mr. Bullard's frank invitation, I am loathe to add (to so much) a preface on him. Rather am I of the opinion of the author who demurred when the first John Murray demanded a preface to his book. A preface (he said) always put him in mind of Hamlet's exclamation to the tardy player, "Leave thy most damnable faces, and begin!"

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THE MEN WHO MAKE OUR NOVELS

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

In a review of Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton's *Bernard Shaw,* Mr. Shaw said of himself: "Like all men, I play many parts, and none of them is more or less real than the other. . . . I am a soul of infinite worth, I am, in short, not only what I can make out of myself, which varies greatly from hour to hour, and emergency to emergency, but what you can see in me." And elsewhere, in the Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans:* "Like all dramatists and mimes of genuine vocation, I am a natural-born mountebank."

All this being true, a whole library has been written about Mr. Shaw and what different people in different parts of the world see in him. He is interesting, he is amusing, he is frank—divertingly so; he is ingenious, witty, earnest—he is, I would swear to it, "a soul of infinite worth," playing many parts.

But of how many men could this be said? You may take my word for it, not of those who make our novels.

Yet there is a belief abroad, voiced by Mr. William Allen White in the final chapter of his *In Our Town*, that "every human life, if one could know it well and translate it into language, has in it the making of a great story." I would ask of Mr. White the number of human lives of which even God has failed to make a great story? They are drab, with an unending round of slack and futile toil as like one another as two blades of grass—but as surely created by Him as the infinite sands of the desert or the far-flung stars that, having no atmosphere, are uninhabited.

"It is because we are blind," says Mr. White, "that we pass men and women around us, heedless of the tragic quality of their lives."

It is nothing of the sort. I am no more blind than is Mr. White. The tragic quality of the lives of the men and women around me is bathos compared to the great tragedies of literature. Time is limited. The world is flooded with such stories as my neighbor's life would make—Heaven forbid that he too should take to writing, translating his miseries into language. Let's have done with this sentimental twaddle. Mr. White knows very well that, in order to make his characters live with a reality not borrowed from the mere acts of everyday—a lifting of the hand, a stifled yawn, a drinking of water—he must create them out of his imagination, taking a dozen or more of those about him to make one lay-figure of romance.

What is the first requirement of a novelist? Put to a jury of average discrimination, James Branch Cabell says, that question would probably result in a hung

jury. It probably would; one saying "A publisher," others "Original ideas." But had I the matter in hand, the picking and choosing of those who are to write our novels, I should insist that they be creatures of infinite worth, capable of playing many parts, mountebanks—and I would write of them a book that should make the rafters ring.

But all this is a vain dreaming. We flatter ourselves that our lives are interesting—and Mr. White smiles benignly, blessing us as little children—but they are not. Not even to us, if I am to believe those Who Make Our Novels. I appealed to some thirty to tell me of their doings, their ways of work and play; and the answers with few exceptions came in diverse individual words: There is nothing to tell. Now if a man can make nothing out of himself . . . but we are here to make something of ourselves, for the joy of nations and the good of humanity.

"There is a deference in the early Mr. Howells, particularly toward stuffy Bostonians," a diffidence which, as Mr. Francis Hackett has said, "makes one ache for him." "It is good for the literary aspirant," Mr. Howells wrote long ago in that quaint volume, *A Boy's Town,* "to realize very early that he is but one of many, for the vice of our comparatively virtuous craft is that it tends to make each of us imagine himself central, if not sole. As a matter of fact, however, the universe does not revolve around any one of us; we make our circuit of the sun along with the other inhabitants of the earth, a planet of inferior magnitude." (But if the other inhabitants of the earth are clods, must we needs be? Man was given speech to

speak.) "The thing we strive for is recognition," continued Mr. Howells, "but when this comes it is apt to turn our heads. I should say, then, that it was better it should not come in a great glare and a loud shout all at once, but should steal slowly upon us, ray by ray, breath by breath." Better for us, perhaps. And for those who would save their skins and their pride whole, doubtless, all this is very good counsel. But is it better for the world? Surely, Mr. Howells has been too reticent. For himself, while praising others, he has claimed nothing. And he has, therefore, been almost lost to American literature. "He is the one American figure," as Mr. Hackett has pointed out, "on whom literary criticism has failed to focus as it should, and from whose large intentions and richly freighted performances too few national writers have renewed themselves." And I think that he, in his modesty, is himself largely to blame for this neglect. For I believe, with M. Anatole France, that it is the duty of the man with a message to present that message to the world—and to call attention to it. It is only the man who has no message, as Mr. Shaw said in his preface on Brieux, that will not beat a drum before his booth. What if Colonel Roosevelt had hid his light beneath a bushel?

Mr. Howells is invariably spoken of with respect, and yet, save in the older generation, that respect is not dowered with affection. He is eulogized, honored, looked up to—but he is seldom treated as a living force. The world moves upon its radical way, doffing its hat, but passing with scarce a break in its stride. The task of interpreting Mr. Howells still waits. Gay,

happy books are written about Mr. Tarkington; the brilliant Miss West clears the air about Henry James that we may see him plain—but only the student (Mr. Alexander Harvey) discusses Mr. Howells. Yet I was warned, "Don't fail to read *A Modern Instance,* the grace and precision and truth of that work make it one of the immortals." Yet, ages ago, James Russell Lowell said that Mr. Howells "is one of the chief honors of our literature." Yet Mr. Howells is monotonously hymned as the "Dean of American Letters," until the phrase rings in the ears like a street ballad. Who is at fault?

Mark Twain said of him: "For forty years his English has been a continual delight and astonishment. In the sustained exhibition of certain qualities—clearness, compression, verbal exactness, and unforced and seemingly unconscious felicity of phrasing—he is, in my belief, without his peer in the English-writing world. *Sustained*—I entrench myself behind that protecting word. There are others who exhibit these great qualities as greatly as does he, but only by intervalled distributions of moonlight with stretches of veiled and dimmer landscape between: whereas Howells' moon sails cloudless skies all night, and all the nights. . . .

"There is another thing which is contentingly noticeable in Mr. Howells' books. That is to say his 'stage directions.' . . . Some authors overdo the stage directions. . . . Other authors . . . have nothing in stock but a cigar, a laugh, a blush, and a bursting into tears. . . . They say:

" '. . . replied Alfred, flipping the ash from his cigar.' (This explains nothing; it only wastes space.)

"'. . . responded Richard with a laugh.' (There is nothing to laugh at; there never is. The writer puts it in from force of habit—automatically; he is paying no attention to his work or he would see there is nothing to laugh at.)

"'. . . murmured Gladys, blushing.' This poor old shopworn blush is a tiresome thing. We get so we would rather Gladys would fall out of the book and break her neck than do it again. . . . In a little while we hate her, just as we do Richard. . . . But I am friendly to Mr. Howells' stage directions, more friendly than to any one's, I think. They are done with a competent and discriminating art, are faithful to the requirements of a stage-direction's proper and lawful office which is to inform. Sometimes they convey a scene and its conditions so well that I believe I could see the scene and get the spirit and meaning of the accompanying dialogue if some one would read merely the stage directions to me and leave out all the talk. For instance, a scene like this, from *The Undiscovered County*:

"'. . . And she laid her arms with a beseeching gesture on her father's shoulder.'

"'. . . she answered, following his gesture with a glance.'

"'. . . she asked, laughing nervously.'

"'. . . she asked, turning swiftly upon him that strange, searching glance.'

"'. . . she reluctantly admitted.'

"'But her voice died wearily away, and she stood looking into his face with puzzled entreaty!'

"Mr. Howells does not repeat his forms, and does not need to: he can invent fresh ones without limit."

One of the best of essays on Mr. Howells is that by Miss Edith Wyatt, from which I quote these several paragraphs by Mark Twain.

Mr. Howells' early novels were scarcely more than sketches of travel. It was not until *The Undiscovered County* that he reached the full stature of his strength. He has published upwards of a hundred volumes—thirty-odd novels, farces, comedies, criticism, reminiscence, verse—and in *Silas Lapham*—Mr. Harvey gives it as his opinion "that from the standpoint of literature regarded as a fine art, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* is the greatest novel ever written. . . . In the matter of form, structure, style, whatever we choose to call that part of a novelist's equipment which reveals him as an artist, this tale of the Laphams is more finished than the masterpieces of Flaubert."

And Mr. Howells has much in common with Flaubert. Asked once if he had ever lost himself in his work, he replied: "Never. The essence of achievement is to keep outside, to be entirely dispassionate, as a sculptor must be moulding his clay." As Pygmalion, adoring his marble girl, never was—as Flaubert, to (I think) the great hurt of his work, tried to be—as is absolutely impossible: *A Modern Instance* proves it impossible. There Mr. Howells takes sides against his villain and stigmatizes his "corrupt nature," until (as Mr. Hacket has said) the book becomes, actually is, a morality.

Mr. Howells was born at Martins Ferry, Ohio, on

March 1, 1837, the son of William Cooper Howells, a country printer and editor, whose library was large and well chosen at the time. In this library Mr. Howells obtained most of his education—beyond the three R's of the country town school-house. He read almost anything and everything that came to hand, specializing in poetry, even going so far as to write a little poetry and set it up in type—to be printed? The story does not go that far.

In 1851 the family fortunes met with disaster—as they say in small towns—and Mr. Howells went away to work as compositor on the *Ohio State Journal,* for four dollars a week, soon graduating into journalism and at twenty-two becoming news editor. His first published work, *Poems of Two Friends,* written with John J. Platt, appeared in 1860—and about this time he began to contribute to the *Atlantic Monthly,* then just founded. The same year he also wrote a campaign biography of Abraham Lincoln. For this he was appointed American Consul at Venice, where he remained until 1865, studying the Italian language and its literature. On his return to the United States he wrote for the New York *Tribune* and the *Nation,* and in 1866 he became assistant editor of the *Atlantic,* becoming editor six years later. Then for a while he contributed to *Harper's,* was editor of the *Cosmopolitan,* and in 1900 returned to *Harper's* to conduct the *Editor's Easy Chair.*

He is to-day, despite Mr. Cabell's choice of Mr. Booth Tarkington, the chief honor of our literature . . . his day done, certainly, but his mark placed high for my generation to study.

His Published Works Include:

Venetian Life, A Chance Acquaintance, The Undiscovered Country, A Modern Instance, A Woman's Reason, The Rise of Silas Lapham, A Hazard of New Fortunes, The Sleeping Car and Other Farces, My Literary Passions, The Landlord at Lion's Head, The Kentons, A Counterfeit Presentment, A Fearful Responsibility, Three Villages, A Little Girl among the Old Masters, Indian Summer, April Hopes, The Mouse Trap, and Other Farces, An Imperative Duty, The Albany Depot, The Quality of Mercy, A Little Swiss Journey, Christmas Every Day, The Unexpected Guests, The World of Chance, The Coast of Bohemia, An Open-Eyed Conspiracy, Miss Bellard's Inspiration, The Leatherwood God, Poems of Two Friends, Life of Abraham Lincoln, A Foregone Conclusion, Italian Journeys, Suburban Sketches, No Love Lost, Their Wedding Journey, Out of the Question, Life of Rutherford B. Hayes, The Lady of the Aroostook, Dr. Breen's Practice, Tuscan Cities, The Minister's Charge, Modern Italian Poets, Annie Kilburn, The Shadow of a Dream, A Boy's Town, Criticism and Fiction, The Letter of Introduction, A Traveler from Altruria, The Day of Their Wedding, A Parting and a Meeting, Impressions and Experiences, Stops of Various Quills, Stories of Ohio, The Story of a Play, Ragged Lady, The Silver Wedding Journey, Literary Friends and Acquaintances, A Pair of Patient Lovers, Heroines of Fiction, Literature and Life, The Flight of Pony Baker, Questionable Shapes, London Films, Certain Delightful English Towns, Between the Dark

and the Daylight, Through the Eye of the Needle, Fennel and Rue, The Mother and the Father, Seven English Cities, New Leaf Mills, The Seen and the Unseen at Stratford-on-Avon, Years of My Youth.

CHAPTER II

NEWTON BOOTH TARKINGTON

"I do not proffer the volume as capillarily soothing," wrote Mr. Cabell, when forwarding *Beyond Life, Dizain des Demiurges* (1919), to me, "nor, certainly, as an assistant to you in writing about any novelist. My motive, possibly, is a desire to empoison your wholesome view of things in general. I cannot say."

I did not read *Beyond Life*—essays written in the third person concerning books: "a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life"—I did not read with any malice aforethought nor, certainly, with any intent to steal; but possibly because when I read, I take lessons in writing, lifting a phrase here and there to store away in memory, I must make use of Mr. Cabell and his conclusions, though (and the danger appears real) the poison of quotation spread to infect my wholesale review of things in general. I find myself too often in agreement with Mr. Cabell to pass him by without some courtesy of recognition—and in especial as regards Mr. Booth Tarkington.

For if, as Stevenson declared, the fairies were tipsy at Mr. Kipling's christening, then, as Mr. Cabell is fain to believe, "at Mr. Tarkington's they must have been in the last stage of maudlin generosity. Poetic

insight they gave to Mr. Tarkington; and the knack of story building; and all their own authentic elfin liveliness of fancy; and actually perceptive eyes, by virtue of which his more truly Tarkingtonian pages are enriched with countless happy little miracles of observation; and the dramatic gift of contriving and causing to move convincingly a wide variety of puppets in nothing resembling the puppet-master; and the not uncommon desire to 'write,' with just enough deficiency in common-sense to make him willing to put up with the laboriousness of writing fairly well. In fine, there is hardly one natural endowment requisite to grace in a creative author that was omitted by these inebriated fairies. And to all this Mr. Tarkington has since added, through lonesome and grinding toil, an astounding proficiency at the indoor sport of adroit verbal expression. No living manipulator of English employs the contents of his dictionary more artfully or, in the general hackneyed and misleading phrase, has a better 'style.'

"No less,"—and (with Mr. Cabell) I take this to be "one of the most tragic items in all the long list of misfortunes which have befallen American literature, . . . the loss of an artist demands lamentation, even when he commits suicide"—"no less, for many years Mr. Tarkington has been writing 'best-sellers,' varied every once in a while by something that was a 'best-seller' in nature rather than performance. His progress has been from the position of a formidable rival of the late Mr. Charles Major (not very long ago the world-famous author of a story entitled *When Knighthood Was in Flower*) to the point of figuring

prominently in *The Saturday Evening Post.* So that, upon the whole, one wonders if ere this the fairies have not humored their protégé yet further, by becoming Prohibitionists.

"Mr. Tarkington has published nothing that does not make very 'pleasant' reading. He has, in fact, re-written the quaint legend, that virtue and honest worth must rise inevitably to be the target both of rice-throwing and of respectful consideration by the bank cashier, as indefatigably as human optimism and the endurance of the human wrist would reasonably permit. For the rest, his plots are the sort of thing that makes criticism seem cruel."

As indeed—for all such gracious exceptions as Mr. Cabell—it too often is. For instance, Mr. Frederick Tabor Cooper, writing in 1911, insisted that *Monsieur Beaucaire* "immediately, once and for all, defined Mr. Tarkington's proper sphere and limitations, proved him one of those writers whose stories, whenever and wherever laid, should carry with them something of the 'once upon a time' atmosphere,—the fictional atmosphere of the story that aims frankly to entertain." *Monsieur Beaucaire* (says Mr. Cooper, too anxious to prove a point) "reduced at once to an absurdity the bare idea of Mr. Tarkington's ever again attempting to write a novel opening with such prosaic actuality as 'There is a fertile stretch of flat lands in Indiana where unagrarian Eastern travelers, glancing from car-windows, shudder and return their eyes to interior upholstery' "—the opening of *The Gentleman from Indiana.* Mr. Cooper, of course, had no means of foretelling the opening of *The Turmoil* (1915):

"There is a midland city in the heart of fair, open country, a dirty and wonderful city nestling dingily in the fog of its own smoke."

Yet it is true that there is a certain sameness about all of Mr. Tarkington's stories. Fault has been found with most of them on the score of lack of plausibility. The basis of practically everything he has written, down to *The Turmoil,* is (as Mr. Holliday has pointed out) "a misunderstanding of one kind or another, of identity, of purpose, of character—and in repeated instances this misunderstanding has been of the most elementary sort, that of mistaken identity. This charge, however" (to quote Mr. Holliday further), "really goes no deeper than to say that, like many men of the highest gift, which he has in fair measure, imagination, he is curiously feeble in the faculty of *invention.* He is no Poe. In some cases, as in *The Flirt,* splendid as character study, his efforts at invention in the surrounding story are almost childlike. Contrary to what very likely we have been wont lightly to suppose, in the essence of his talent, the play is never the thing. The people are the thing, and the freshness of the art with which the thrice-told tale is told."

But, as Mr. Cabell has it, though "his ventriloquism is startling in its excellence, his marionettes, under the most life-like of exteriors, have either hearts of gold or entrails of sawdust; there is no medium; and as touches their behavior, all the Tarkingtonian puppets 'form themselves' after the example of the not unfamous young person who had a curl in the middle of her forehead. And Mr. Tarkington's auctorial

philosophy was summed up long ago, in *The Gentleman from Indiana:* 'Look,' said Helen. 'Aren't they good, the dear people?'—'The beautiful people,' he answered.

"Now this, precisely this, Mr. Tarkington has been answering ever since to every riddle of life. . . . Yet to some carping few of us (who read the daily papers) this sentiment now seems peculiarly anachronistic and irrational. The world to us is not very strikingly suggestive of a cosmic gumdrop variegated by oceans of molasses: we dispute if Omnipotence was ever, at any time, a confectioner's apprentice. . . . So we remember Mr. Tarkington's own story of Lukens and the advice therein, when dealing with a popular novelist, to 'treat him with silent contempt or a brick.' And we reflect that Mr. Tarkington is certainly not a person to be treated with silent contempt. . . . For Mr. Tarkington has not mere talent but an uncontrollable wizardry that defies concealment, even by the livery of a popular novelist. . . . And in fine, it all comes back to this: to write 'best-sellers' is by ordinary a harmless and very often a philanthropic performance; but in Mr. Tarkington's case it is a misappropriation of funds. . . . The fact remains that out of forty-nine years of living Mr. Tarkington has thus far given us only *Seventeen.* Nor would this matter were Mr. Tarkington a Barclay or a Harrison, or even the mental and artistic equal of the trio's far more popular rival, Mr. Harold Bell Wright. But Mr. Tarkington had genius. That is even more tragic than the 'pleasant' ending of *The Magnificent Ambersons.*"

Mr. Tarkington had genius. And it is unfortunate

that he should be, as a rule, so sentimentally interested. He is as familiar with the people, with the scene, with the life of which he writes as it is humanly possible to be. "He knows," as Mr. Hackett has said, reviewing *The Magnificent Ambersons,* "the great ball where the old grand-uncle distresses the college Hyperion; he knows the age of serenade and New Year's party, the age of tandems and surreys and cutters and 'git a hoss'; he understands the household ruled by a benevolent despot, with a son and his stately wife that only ask an embassy as their plaything, and a daughter that is content with an unlimited bank account and another son, the man with the light touch who is amused to dabble expensively in financiering—almost nothing that is necessary to creating a study of this American reality is lacking in Mr. Tarkington except the temper of a master novelist." And that he will, it seems, never have. He deals more kindly with his characters than ever life would.

In telling how his first novel came to be written, he said: "I'd been writing short stories until I thought I might venture a bigger job—so I did. All the short stories, including *Monsieur Beaucaire,* had been rejected by several magazines, and I had no idea that the novel would get into print. Of course, I hoped it might. I'd have written it just the same if I'd been sure it wouldn't. Mr. McClure took it. It was *The Gentleman from Indiana.* I had no real success until I struck Indiana subjects."

Booth Tarkington was born in Indianapolis, July 29, 1869. He is a descendant of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, scholar and orator of Revolutionary fame.

His great-grandmother was that Mary Newton who figures as a beauty in the Annals of Old Salem. His family had been prominent in Indiana for three generations. He was himself named for an uncle, Newton Booth, at one time governor of California and a Senator from that State. His father, John Stevenson Tarkington, a lawyer, captain 132 Indiana Infantry during the Civil War, member of the State legislature, judge of the circuit court, has given the leisure of later years to literature and has published two books.

Mr. Tarkington attended Phillips Exeter Academy, entering college at Purdue and transferring to Princeton as a Junior. He helped to revive, and was for a time editor of, the Princeton *Tiger*; he contributed essays to the *Lit*; he wrote a play for the Triangle Club; and was, on graduation, voted the most popular and the most promising man in the class of '93. (His first tale to be sold, *Cherry,* dealt with the country round about Princeton and undergraduate life in pre-Revolutionary days.) He lives to-day, for the most part, in Indianapolis, working there, rising at nine, and hard at it in a bath-robe at nine-thirty—sometimes locking himself in for two or three days running, sleeping a few hours in the night on a couch, eating as little as possible. And yet he is far famed on account of his social tact, his goodfellowship, his singing of *Danny Deever*. . . .

> The same old Tark—just watch him shy
> Like hunted thing, and hide, if let,
> Away behind his cigarette
> When "Danny Deever" is the cry.

Keep up the call and by and by
We'll make him sing, and find he's yet
The same old Tark.

THE WORKS OF TARKINGTON INCLUDE:

The Gentleman from Indiana (1899), *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900), *The Two Vanrevels* (1902), *Cherry* (1903), *In the Arena* (1905), *The Conquest of Canaan* (1905), *The Beautiful Lady* (1905), *His Own People* (1907), *Guest of Quesnay* (1908), *Beasley's Christmas Party* (1909), *Beauty and the Jacobin* (1911), *The Flirt* (1913), *Penrod* (1914), *The Turmoil* (1915), *Penrod and Sam* (1916), *Seventeen* (1917), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918).

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

Because his are initials to conjure with, I quote F. P. A. (Franklin P. Adams, of the New York *Tribune*) to introduce the author of *God's Puppets*, short long-stories telling of life—men, women, and their ways—in Kansas:

> "Fiction in America recovers from its blight
> When I read a small-town story by Old Bill White. . . ."

Yet Mr. White is ignored by those who write critically in books concerning what is euphemistically termed American Literature. For all that, Mr. White is (as Mr. Francis Hackett has said, as *In the Heart of a Fool* proves) an artist with words, a creator of characters that live without undue manipulation or help from their creator.

And he is as naïve and simple as a child. When asked for the story of his life, he was quite taken aback. "I would rather you would judge from my books," he said. "Every writer has a multiple personality and his characters represent the various faces of his life. You can get the dates from Who's Who; you can get something from my picture"—that of a bucolic Westerner, a hog-raiser—"but not much. I

am willing to be judged by my books. I suppose that is the only way I can get myself across the chasm from one human being to another who is out of eye reach . . . I may possibly be in New York"—he sailed for Europe early in December to attend the Peace Conference as a reporter, and to become one of our delegates to the meeting with the Russian leaders scheduled for Prince's Island—"I may possibly be in New York and if you could come up there, I should be pleased to talk the arm off of you, if you will let me. But for the life of me I cannot see how I can make any headway through the written page"—this, mind you, from the man who wrote *The Martial Adventures of Henry and Me,* autobiography such as the most introspective could not achieve. "I really want to help and don't desire to be stand-offish, but I cannot focus any light upon myself from my inner consciousness. . . . Compared to my instinctive reticence a clam shouts like an auctioneer. . . ."

And so I read *In Our Town* over again after a lapse of years:—

"Ours is a little town in that part of the country called the West by those who live east of the Alleghanies, and referred to lovingly as 'back East' by those who dwell west of the Rockies. It is a country town where, as the song goes, 'you know everybody and they all know you,' and the country newspaper is the social clearing-house."

In that town (Emporia, Kansas) Mr. White was born, February 10, 1868; there he still lives, and edits the *Gazette.* A town of 10,000 inhabitants—and they all know Mr. White. When his first long novel ap-

peared, *A Certain Rich Man,* they bought 2,500 copies. There, in 1909, on his return from Europe, they piled him into a low-necked hack, such as kings use when they show themselves to their people, to drive through the streets in triumph—it was (says the Kansas City *Star*) an extraordinary reception which greeted him—it resulted in a quite general belief in his *A Certain Rich Man*—the *Bookman* took it to be "a book very much worth while reading"—and it is . . . you have my word for it. It required three years in the writing and went through six editions in a month, has sold a quarter of a million copies.

When it came to the actual working out of the story—the idea had grown out of an enforced leisure spent at Coronado Beach tossing pebbles into the sea—Mr. White went up into the mountains of Colorado where he established himself and family in a log cabin and set up a tent for workshop. "My working day was supposed to begin at nine o'clock in the morning, but the truth is I seldom reached the tent before ten. Then it took me some time to get down to work. From then on until late in the afternoon I would sit at my typewriter, chew my tongue, and pound away. Each night I read to my wife what I had written that day and Mrs. White would criticize it. While my work was red-hot I couldn't get any perspective on it—each day's installment seemed to me the finest literature I had ever read. She didn't always agree with me. When she disapproved of anything I threw it away—after a row—and rewrote it."

It is a rattling fine yarn, almost as fine as *In the Heart of a Fool,* and the everlasting moralizing, the

preaching must be borne with as it is borne with in Bunyan. Why Mr. White, living in the most moral community in all the world—which our middle-west most surely can claim to be—should be so obsessed with a sense of sin, remains one of those riddles that disturb the critic. But that the wicked prosper for a certain length of time seems to have dawned on Mr. White—and he would prove their prosperity that vanity of which a greater preacher (and a greater artist) than ever he is spoke in the long ago.

But his moralizing annoys Mr. Mencken, that Mr. Mencken whom I find quite irresistible. "Mr. White," he says, "shows the viewpoint of a chautauqua spell-binder and the manner of a Methodist evangelist. . . . And if it were not for one thing I should be tempted to spit on my hands and give it (*In the Heart of a Fool*) such a slating that the very hinges of this great family periodical (*The Smart Set*) would grow white-hot. . . . That thing, that insidious dissuader, is an ineradicable suspicion that, after all, the book is absolutely American. . . . One may observe this sadly, but it is rather vain to rail against it. . . ."

Now Mr. White has not merely the "view-point of a Chautauqua spell-binder" and "the manner of a Methodist Evangelist," or he could never have attained to the general respect of a reasonably intelligent audience—he would remain simply a spell-binder, a Methodist Evangelist; he is vastly more. True, he burst upon us in 1896 with an editorial, reprinted far and wide, asking *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, begging that Kansas raise more corn and less hell—but such lamentations are not, necessarily, the mewlings of an

idiot—Jeremiah is proof against any such contention. Mr. White has brave notions—such as Ben Jonson insisted were necessary to the business of authorship—and he would doubtless improve us if possible; but he also improves his writing, carefully studying his characters.

Concerning him, the Hon. Victor Murdock has written:—

"A visitor to Emporia, Kansas, is apt to find William Allen White in one of four activities—political, commercial, literary or domestic. These activities are unlike. But in them White remains the same—that is White.

"Beginning with the last—his home life. He gives himself up to the solid comforts of domestic happiness. There is nothing about him to indicate that he has a commercial care, or a political interest or a literary design. He takes full liberty with his library, pulling down Kipling or Wells and scanning a sentence or two at random and then replacing the book with no sign that he has taken anything out of it. He turns on the talking-machine and plants himself squarely in front of it—going strong for the Valkyrie, Rheingold and Schubert's unfinished symphony and plunking the needle back on some particularly favored phrase. He wanders forth with his family into the garden and notes, without particular enthusiasm, the progress of wistaria, lilac and iris. Back again in the house, he edges over onto the piano seat and tries very softly and quite beautifully 'Genevieve' with minor improvisations. He has an eye to the kitchen and an adolescent demand as to the nature of the dessert.

He rises a degree in enthusiasm over the business of salad-fabrication, and wanders back into the library when it has been disposed of. Now all this is William Allen White at home—but it is without the identifying characteristic which marks him everywhere. That identifying characteristic is the appearance of mental detachment while he is at it. One cannot too surely charge that he does not know he is looking at the iris, or listening to the Valkyrie or gloating over the salad, but one carries away the impression that he is doing these things somewhat mechanically and that his real occupation at the moment is some tremendous thinking in the center of an isolated mental area, safe against all manner of outside invasion.

"It is not phlegm. It is never mistaken for phlegm in White. His quiescence is plainly the envelope of a prodigious energy. What is true in his home life is true in his other activities—the abstraction carries through and marks him in each.

"He loves politics. The public interest is his passion. Men and their ambitions, in the RAW, fascinate him. But he is never a spectator. He is always a participant. He has an eager hand for the battle-ax, and his voice is clarion with a battle-cry. Always prominent in affairs and at times controlling, there is no question of economics that does not hold him and no infinitesimal detail of personal maneuver that calls in vain on his attention. Like almost all Kansas politicians of this generation, he banks on the long-distance telephone. Over this he consults and is consulted. He is decisive in his counsels, quick and certain in his opinions, and wise in his deductions. And yet when

he turns away from the telephone, you are quite sure that even in this instant action and alertness, he has been thinking of something else—and something else of greater moment. In another man, you might say that he was one who was keeping rein on his own enthusiasms, and guarding against self-deception. But White's detachment is not that. It is something else—as though he were fitting passing detail into a bigger future, which he is painting for himself and not exhibiting.

"Commercially White has a good head. He knows costs in his own establishment—a newspaper office. He can talk depreciation, overhead, indirect labor. Profit and loss and what can and can not be done with it, as an accounting device, is known to him as to a bang-up book-keeper. Around his shop he knows the newsprint on hand, whether the quality of ink is keeping up and whether Grocer Jones has left his advertisement out and why. He is a busy, bustling, belligerent solicitor for business about town, an absolutely consistent assailant on bills payable and an enthusiastic enemy of overdrafts. Commercially he carries on well. When he is at it you might say that he is a born business genius—except that he here again shows the same detachment.

"Is this detachment his literary side, which is whirring away in his mind when he is busy in other activities? Are the things he sees at home, in business and politics grist to his literary mill and therefore incidental to his chief mental activity—the writing of books? I do not think so. White writes his books by burning the kilowatt hours. He is infinitely painstaking. He

lives the men and women he depicts. But in the midst of it he remains the artist. He knows when the footlights are acting up and the back-drop is askew. His creations are characters—but they are creations and so are their environments. But when White has been face to face with them in all the tender love that an author must have for his own, he turns away with the old detachment intact and unbetrayed.

"There is no particular psychology to be read in all this. It may or it may not yield anything to analysis. But as I have studied him, it is White."

. . . . . .

THE WORKS OF WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE:

The Real Issue and Other Stories (1896), *The Court of Boyville* (1899), *Stratagems and Spoils* (1901), *In Our Town* (1906), *A Certain Rich Man* (1909), *The Old Order Changeth* (1910), *God's Puppets* (1916), *The Martial Adventures of Henry and Me* (1918), *In the Heart of a Fool* (1918).

CHAPTER IV

ERNEST POOLE

The Macmillan Company has issued a leaflet concerning *His Family,* the second of Mr. Poole's novels —a leaflet recounting in detail the story of Mr. Poole's days. In like manner, the John Lane Company once issued a leaflet concerning Mr. Theodore Dreiser; but whereas the Poole affair was written in Macmillan's offices by Macmillan's men, the Dreiser pamphlet quotes Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, Professor John Cowper Powys, Mr. Harris Merton Lyon—and at great length, page after page, essay and verse. The Dreiser pamphlet is well worth reading; I have enjoyed it immensely; it is most instructive—in especial Mr. Lyon, quoted from *Reedy's Mirror*:—

"In many ways, my masters, the one man writing in this country to-day that is worth the lot of them. All the good magazine fellows—and they are good fellows, the Tarkingtons, Beaches, Londons, and the rest—may play their little light-hearted game and fare on into the dusk, pleased that they did nothing and did it well. They are for the most part dead before they die, and so no mystery. But here is a fellow who now shows as if he may never die at all—whose work reveals at once that lucidity and that inscrutability

which we accord the seer. This man is mysterious; he is interesting. . . ." And so on, through several pages, ending as he began: "The one man, my masters, worth the lot of them."

It is well done, but it is the sort of thing that I could never do. Not that I am so blamed honest I dare not make a sweeping statement that, under torture, I would not vouch for; but that I should feel ridiculous, speaking out of a limited knowledge of "the Tarkingtons, Beaches, Londons, and the rest." For though I am writing a book about them, my knowledge is limited. . . .

So far as I can make out, Mr. Ernest Poole, though more of a novelist than most magazine fellows, has been acclaimed beyond his just deserts: he is not a great novelist, in the sense that Mr. Wells is great, that Mr. Conrad is a novelist. He writes well of certain charming old men, twilight figures, and of a certain restless and ambitious type of woman. He writes beautifully of Russia; in fact, I am rather inclined to agree with him that his best writing is in *The Village*, a book of Russian Impressions. He is painstaking, a student, and ranks with the leaders in American letters—though not with Mr. Cabell or Mr. Dreiser. He made his reputation, on the instant, with *The Harbor*, a story of the constantly changing life along the wharves about New York City; strengthened it with *His Family*, memorable for the character of Roger Gale, the father; established it as of more than fleeting concern to the wise with *His Second Wife*. To write and publish three first-class novels in three years is no slight achievement.

Mr. Poole was born in Chicago, January 23, 1880, in an old-fashioned red brick house over on the north side. When about seven or eight years of age, growing adventurous, he joined a gang of boys and played at various wars among the lumber in the yards down near the mouth of the river. Later he was sent to a private school and took some part in athletics. Meanwhile he had taken up the violin and had begun to hope that some day he might become a great musician —and so, being prepared for college a year ahead of schedule, he devoted that year to the study of music. Then he went to Princeton. "It got a tremendous grip on me," he says, "the more so because in my freshman year I was not only for a time on the Mandolin Club, rehearsing, making short trips, etc., but because I also tried out for the daily paper, scouring the college for news of all kinds. I spent about six hours a day on these two essential parts of a college education—and failed in both. I was dropped from the Mandolin Club before the Xmas trip and was not elected an editor in the spring election. I doubt if I shall ever forget the night on the campus when a friend going by on a bicycle told me of that failure."

Later, however, he was busy in other college doings: stood fairly well in his studies, graduating as an honor man. And he spent a great deal of time in reading—long afternoons in the quiet old Princeton library, rummaging through books of all sorts; and some time writing—the libretto of a light opera refused by the Dramatic Club, another play that received rather more than passing attention from the English professors. He belonged to one of those famous eating-clubs that

so enraged Mr. Wilson, took long tramps in the country round about. "On the whole I had a wonderful time," he says, "and should not like to have missed it—though I realize how many other things I might have learned in those four years."

In 1902 he went to live in the University Settlement on New York's East Side—simply because he wanted to write about life in the crowded tenement sections and wanted to see it all first hand. He spent two or three years down there, doing little or no settlement work, giving his days and nights to digging into the ways of existence, the terrors, the celebrations of the poor—writing short stories and news articles for various magazines. In this work he was pushed more and more into the labor and radical movement as a way out of the poverty everywhere so terrible, calling for some alleviation. He began to write articles on the labor unions; and as the *Outlook* correspondent in the big stockyard strike out in Chicago, he lived for six weeks in the stockyards, becoming a sort of volunteer press agent for the union—and in that capacity was allowed to sit in at the meetings of the Strike Committee. A great part of the information thus secured he used years later in the latter part of *The Harbor.*

Meanwhile he had grown interested in the radical movement throughout the world, especially in Russia; and during the revolutionary movement there in 1905 he went over for the *Outlook* and remained through several months, traveling from Petrograd all the way south to the Caucasus—an exciting journey. He was then twenty-four years old.

Later, when he came back, he went on writing for the magazines, rather centering his efforts on procuring help and sympathy for the Russian revolutionaries.

Shortly thereafter he married, and during the next few years he lived in a small house near Washington Square, giving his time over to the writing of plays. About a dozen in all were written, though but six were submitted—and of those six, three produced, two in New York, one on the road. From a financial point of view, they were all failures, for the longest run was less than three months. But they attracted some notice, and more than that: they helped him to learn how to write.

About five years ago he turned to books—wrote *The Harbor* and then *His Family*. It was *His Family* which won for Ernest Poole the Pulitzer prize of $1,000 as "the American novel published during the year which shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American manners and manhood." On each something like a year and a half was spent, writing and re-writing—Mr. Poole preferred to re-write and polish rather than to struggle through the first rough drafts. "I wrote each novel some eight or nine times," he says. Since then he has published a short novel called *His Second Wife* and two books on Russia which I, for one, am grateful for: *The Dark People* and *The Village*.

During the war he went to Germany as a correspondent and spent some weeks at the Western Front. When our country entered the war he went into the

Foreign Press Bureau of the Committee on Public Information—and shortly after left for Russia again as a correspondent.

He is now, with armistice, the press bureau closed, back at home working on another novel.

THE WORKS OF ERNEST POOLE:

The Harbor (1915), *His Family* (1917), *His Second Wife* (1918), *The Dark People* (1918), *The Village, Russian Impressions* (1919).

CHAPTER V

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

In *The Mentor* for September, 1918, having devoted a page to Mr. Rex Beach and another to Mr. Robert W. Chambers, Mr. Arthur B. Maurice allows a sentence to Mr. Hergesheimer. 'Tis gracious of him, for (as he says) Mr. Hergesheimer "has won a place among writers by reason of his picturesque style and original invention." Indeed—and Mr. Knopf, being his publisher, will swear to it—he is by some regarded as "our most important novelist," though he lack the gay humor of Mr. Tarkington, the scholarly wit of Mr. Cabell, the style of Mr. Howells.

Mr. Hergesheimer is the author of *The Lay Anthony,* as surprising a first novel as any in a decade; of *The Three Black Pennys,* which goes far to fulfill that early promise; of the exotic *Java Head;* of *Mountain Blood,* a romantic melodrama written around life in the Virginia mountains; and of various shorter tales in the *Saturday Evening Post* and in that remarkable collection, *Blood and Iron.*

The Lay Anthony. Mr. Hergesheimer has confessed that, his being a 'prentice hand, he was not altogether successful in his attempt to retell, in terms of the modern young man, the Platonic romance of Dante and Beatrice. Yet the tale has much to com-

mend it—an (in American letters) unexampled use of color, red and purple and gold; the heady fragrance of lilacs blown by an April whisper of wind across shaded level lawns to one passing beyond the garden wall; the sudden burgeoning of a long delayed spring; the echo of that search, chronicled in ancient legend, which leads, if not to the Holy Grail, to a victory over life in death, the victory of Mr. Conrad's Lena. As Sir Launcelot worshiped and served the Queen, denying the Lily Maid of Astolot, so young Anthony Ball put aside Miss Annot Hardinge with memories of Eliza Dreen; as the Great St. Anthony was tempted in the Egyptian desert about the year 271, so was Mr. Hergesheimer's Lay Anthony tempted almost beyond denial by the wantons of our less spectacular day—but Mr. Hergesheimer bequeathes his hero for strength in resistance only a dream of perfect earthly love, illusion of the lost, not that divine fire which burned to an ash, flared in a last ascension of light to guide the faltering feet of Azrael's dark angel, in the hearts of such hermits as are canonized because they served God in a world of His own making, far from the comforting and vain makeshifts of man's fool-paradise. Nor is Mr. Hergesheimer's hero proud of his chastity as were those old fathers of the church. "Secretly, and in an entirely natural and healthy manner, he was ashamed for his innocence; he carefully concealed it in an elaborate assumption of wide worldly knowledge and experience, in an attitude of cynical comprehension, and indifference toward girls." So, that in the end it becomes unhealthy, an obsession with him, converting him to an exaggerated belief in the

virtue of physical virginity—not, by any manner of means, for all our puritanic faiths, for all his knightly continence, the most precious of man's possessions, for virtue is of the spirit, not of the flesh; so that he dies, with his lady's name on his lips, pure—"in the exact, physical aspect of the word"—dies (because Mr. Hergesheimer is something of an ironist) unsoiled upon a bed in a bawdy house. . . .

The Three Black Pennys (in which three men and three women stand out from the printed page, living their passionate lives with unforgetable earnestness) suggests both Mr. Conrad and Mr. Galsworthy in character and distinction of writing—"a novel," as Mr. Mencken has said, "that commands respect." Indeed *The Three Black Pennys* goes far to make of *Java Head* an anti-climax—*Java Head* which owes altogether too much to a reading of Mr. Conrad: no stay-at-home coming by inland-waterways to a casual acquaintance with the sea, with ships and those who voyage far on them, dare force a comparison with the author of *Youth* and *Typhoon* . . . and Mr. Hergesheimer, setting his stage in the Salem of Polk's administration (circa 1848), takes the marriage of *An Outcast of the Islands,* elevates it to the social pretensions of old New England mariners and the dignity of a Manchu lady of rank—and breaks it against Puritan prejudice and the opium dreams of a shipping-clerk. A worthy book—do not misunderstand—but not the best that Mr. Hergesheimer is capable of; a charming book, subdued and deliberately patterned in a mosaic of silks, scented fans, poppy fantasies, the quiet broken now and again by the iras-

cible Captain Ammidon, Sr., or the laughter of girls on their way to dance with beauxs of accepted propriety, melancholy with the whine of the Nautilus tugging at her anchor, conquering as she put out to sea. Mr. Hergesheimer is always to be read. . . .

"But personally," he says, "I am without interest. I live in a very old long low gray stone house beyond a little town, a pleasant place and a pleasant interior with wide fireplaces and walnut furniture and bright archaic rugs. I have been happily married for eleven years and have no children. My pleasures are very commonplace—rock bass fishing, golf and the reprehensible game of poker; in these I am successful (or it may be luck) only in the fishing.

"The grandfather with whom I lived as a child and boy, my mother's father, was Thomas MacKellar, a Scots-American typefounder and hymn-writer. My father's family had lived for a respectable number of generations in Philadelphia. He (my father) was an officer in the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey; a stout and, to me, largely strange individual with bright blue eyes and temper and cheeks bronzed with exposure. As much as anything I remember him, in the rare hours when he was home, playing frightfully on the fiddle—yet there is another memory, perhaps more significant than the melancholy strains of *The Arkansas Traveler* . . . my father bending over a large table on trestles, drawing with beautiful patience huge intricate maps.

"My grandfather's house was rather large and of stone, with a tower on the façade and supporting porches; it was in a suburb of Philadelphia, a place

of smooth lawns and solid houses and shaded streets; our grounds swept back and down to the stables and the coachman's house hung with wistaria; there were a great many fruit trees with their succession of blossoms and a fountain with stone cupids, a basin and gold fish in the front. All the memories which have power to stir me are of the various aspects of nature and places—I remember perfectly the characters of the trees at Woodnest, though I haven't seen them for thirty years; I remember them hung with Chinese lanterns on the Fourth of July and cased in clear ice in January.

"The dwellers there were its owner, always old with a short beard and steel-bowed spectacle, rigorously Presbyterian; two still more ancient great-aunts, like shrivelled and blasted apples; another excessively genteel, unnatural black hair and a proud face with crisp surah silks and black enamelled gold chains; my mother and myself. It was not a haunt of noise and I was sick more than a little. At four of summer afternoons we'd drive out, two sleek fat horses in a barouche—grandfather in a coffee-colored duster, Aunt Henrietta erect and elegant with a carriage parasol like a mauve carnation, the coachman permeated with an odor which I have since come to recognize as whiskey . . . down by the Park we drove, a way by a jade shadowed stream with perhaps a rowboat on it from one of the small landings, a way cool and green—Hooker's green number two, painters would call it.

"The house had long heavy window draperies, white marble mantels and tall glimmering mirrors in gold

frames, onyx-topped tables and a formal parlor with a lovely Chinese cabinet and smooth incurably domestic paintings of the Dutch school. I recall it best late on Sunday afternoons filled with the wailing organ music of my grandfather's playing. . . . Nothing, I am certain, has since had any such power to impress itself upon me as that period. At perhaps my nineteenth year every one, it seemed, died at once.

"What remains? I have no dogmatic religion; I like the music of Christopher Gluck better than any other; I keep Airedale terriers and no cats; I think James Branch Cabell writes beautifully. . . . And I practically never went to school, and when I did it was days wasted; I read trash, or (at least) that is what it is everywhere called, until I was eighteen; I then progressed (or retrogressed?) to Joseph Conrad, from Conrad to Turgenev, from Turgenev to Jeremy Taylor, from Taylor to George Moore, from Moore to almost nothing. . . . Looking back over the whole field of my work a very few things are evident, and principally that I always write about people, men usually near forty, who are not happy. The story at bottom is nearly always the same—a struggle between what is called the spirit and what is called the flesh—the spirit is victorious—that is why it seems to me my books are happy books. . . . And I am, of course, conceited—though the cheapest mind in the world, the most venal editor, by merely talking long or loud enough, can send me home full of confusion and apologies. Part of my conceit lies in the opinion that I do women extremely well, particularly girls, the lovely girls Turgenev understood so completely. I'd like to write a

novel about a girl of fourteen, slender with a black bang and blue-black eyes, in a modern hotel with porphyry columns and turkey red carpet, against a background of cold gorged women in dinner gowns; most probably I never shall, but I'd like to; the necessary sex, gossamer-like, an affair of sprigged cambric, might seem indecent to the American public gesture—yet anything that is beautiful will do; what I mean by beauty is the quality of a courageous purpose maintained against the hopeless and transitory aspects of life and death. The transitory in especial—everlasting flowers are the stupidest imaginable; this is clear enough: that things are fine and pinch the heart only if they are addressed to fatality. How long would you keep a muslin rose out of the waste basket? It is the same with youth and love—love matched against death and the loser in the degree of its perfection.

"Yet this doesn't account for the setting of most of my stories back in the Victorian period, nor for the fact that in Italy I paid no attention to the heroic quattrocento and read nothing but in the last part of the eighteenth. I made no effort toward 1840—that involves an enormous, a distasteful amount of work for which I have the worst preparation in the world, except in the way of persistence. I am always being urged to write about to-day, but my imagination goes perpetually back to crinoline and ormolu and sparkling hock. These things have for me the envelopment necessary to the calling out of an emotional effect; they are all of a tone, wistful and gay and lost; and the story, the elements involved, must be as simple as

possible, the qualities that have always been potent. . . . Yet nothing is asserted for the future.

"After fifteen years of labor—that for any result might as well have been spent in invisible ink—and now a number more, I write quite easily, about twenty-five hundred words long hand a day; this my secretary types; it is then polished and polished and typed again; that, in the books, with three or four proofs shifted in a manner which must make any typesetter's mind seethe with anger—scarlet to crimson, crimson to vermilion, and back to scarlet . . . no, geranium. I write all the time; it is a disease really, and anything else irritates me out of all reasonable proportion. I'm naturally lazy and inaccurate and procrastinate without end . . . a more unsuitable person to be the victim of a hopeless and ideal pursuit you can't imagine."

Mr. Hergesheimer has written the following books of fiction:

The Lay Anthony (1914), *Mountain Blood* (1915), *The Three Black Pennys* (1917), *Gold and Iron* (1918), *Java Head* (1919).

CHAPTER VI

RUPERT HUGHES

I wrote to Major Rupert Hughes what must have been a charming letter, for he answered, "Your very attractive letter received," and promised to contribute an autobiography to my Lives of the Novelists. He has been as good as his word. . . .

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY REQUEST

Rupert Hughes

Henry Fielding would have sat up in his grave with a gasp if he had been able to see in one of our strictest weeklies a recent article called "The Noblest Novelist of Them All," reviewing a three volume edition of a *History of Henry Fielding,* written by a professor, and published by the Yale University Press.

Fielding made no secret of his distress when critics called his writings "low." They would have been called "sensational" if the word had been coined then. He was a tireless portrayer of the fast set in town and country, among the squalid and the gorgeous, in the attics, palaces, inns and highways. He filled his books full of scholarship and toyed with Latin, but

he terrified many of his contemporaries by his vulgar realisms. He was successful with his novels, but he wrote also farces, burlesques, librettos, essays, travel-stuff—almost everything.

He has described his high opinion of the novel as a form of social history, but those who read him in his own day took him as a mere entertainer.

And now he is a classic! While most of his contemptuous critics are forgotten. He is called the father of the English novel.

Fielding wrote of his own time and people almost exclusively. He took characters to see the matinée idol, Mr. Garrick, and the popular composer, Mr. Handel. He mentioned his contemporaries by name. His *Joseph Andrews* was a parody of a best seller about a virtuous chambermaid. He wrote a study of a favorite criminal of his day, and loved wild young men who got into trouble with the police.

One of his most startling pages, and to me one of the great pages of literature, is his description for the sake of record of exactly what two foul-mouthed, typical young swells of his day would say going through a door.

The reading of Fielding in my postgraduate days had an immense influence on my literary program. I had planned to be a professor of English literature and write a bit of fiction, verse and drama on the side. I came gradually to desire to do for New York a little of what Fielding did for London. My first long poem, however, was a blank verse dramatic monolog of Greek life called *Gyges' Ring*. It was published in a volume that had some superlative praise and sold a

few hundred copies. As a counterweight, I wrote a long irregularly rhymed and rhythmed poem describing the then new diversion, the "Serpentine Dance," and trying to catch some of its color and swirl.

I left Yale without taking the Ph.D. I had planned to earn, accepted an M.A. and gave up professorial ambitions for what I called "creative" work.

My first theatrical production was a terrific failure, lasting one night in New York. Besides being amateurishly written, and outrageously produced, it was counted a silly dream because it tried to put contemporary costumes on the stage in comic opera. I was twenty-two at the time, and I feel a million years old when I write this, but it is a fact that most of the managers refused to consider the work on the ground of its modernity and Americanism.

My next production, several years later, was a second and last try at comic opera, the libretto again concerning contemporary people. It also failed though most of the comic operas were now in modern costume. Very little of my libretto was left by the time the producer got through with it, so I shall never know just how bad it was.

The same year I collaborated on a Greek melodrama, *Alexander the Great,* which played a season on the road but never reached New York—thank heaven! This was my last effort at ancient or foreign art.

After many failures, I got success with a play, *The Bridge,* which ran three years as *The Man Between,* a capital and labor play with the hero a bridge-builder who stands between the two forces, suffering from

the excesses of both in his frenzy to get things built. This was produced some years before Mr. Galsworthy's *Strife.*

My farce *Excuse Me* had an immense success. It was a character study of Pullman car conditions. Other plays of mine succeeded or failed as luck would have it.

On leaving Yale, I spent a few months as a reporter on a New York daily paper and learned a good deal about the city, became an ardent lover of it, and a defender of it against the cheap slanders of those who call it Babylon or Nineveh, or heartless, vile, or anything else but a very large group of assorted people.

I have been able to love New York without ceasing to love the small town life of my childhood, or the London, Paris and other cities of my later residence. I love realism without ceasing to love romance, native and foreign literature, science and fairy stories, classics and newspapers, history and vaudeville. In fact I love everything and everybody, and my whole effort at self-education has been to avoid condemnations, contempts, snobberies, and cheap scholasticisms or modernisms.

I was born in a Missouri village, whence my parents moved to Keokuk, Iowa, on the Mississippi river in whose waters I spent a large part of my boyhood.

My ancestors on both sides came to America early in the Seventeenth Century, settling in Virginia and North Carolina. My mother's grandfather was a soldier in the Revolution. Her father kept slaves. My father's father was a Kentuckian. As a lieutenant in

the Black Hawk War, he received a grant of land in Illinois where my father was born.

My father became a lawyer, and played a strenuous part in railroad development in the mid West. He became later a railroad president. As a lawyer he has been concerned in many very famous suits; one of them, the Scotland County Bond cases, began the year I was born, and ran up and down the supreme, district, state and county courts till I was 26 years old, when he finally won it. His analytical mind and grasp of evidence had a great influence in my development.

My mother is one of the most artistic souls I ever met, with as great a love for art and romance as my father for law. I was brought up on Greek sculpture and Italian art at her knee. My sister and one brother took up music, and another is an inventor of distinction.

My first published works were sonnets and essays and musical and art criticism. I spent years in offices as an assistant editor of weekly and monthly magazines and of a world's history. I have composed a good deal of music, edited a musical cyclopedia, written a pioneer work on American composers, a musical novel, and a vast amount of stuff on nearly every kind of topic.

The only claim a good deal of this has on tolerance is its spontaneous sympathy, its earnest effort at accuracy, and its expression of my philosophy of art and life.

My first serials were the *Lakerim Athletic Club* stories in *St. Nicholas,* studies of real boys in the mid-

West, and these were my first books. They still sell though published in 1897. Otherwise I was rather slow about getting started in fiction. I could sell articles and essays and books on almost any subject, but nobody cared for my stories. Two novels, a Civil War novel of Missouri life, *The Whirlwind,* and a novel of a pianist's career, *Zal,* received very cordial book reviews, but very poor sales.

Gradually my short stories began to be accepted and to win increasing favor. Then *The Red Book* took me up on a venture as a serial writer with *What Will People Say?* and my subsequent success, such as it is, has been a constant astonishment to me.

This story was a thorough revision of a novelette I had made of an ambitious play that failed dismally. The novelette had not found a publisher. I decided to bring it down to date and to attach it to the astounding dance mania that swept the world. The title expressed the moral code of the heroine. I treated the dance-craze as an amazing social phenomenon worthy of careful presentation.

The next novel, *Empty Pockets,* was an experiment in the mystery story, using a structural device said to be new. I began with the usual dead body and then instead of working backward to the solution of the mystery, I turned time back a whole year, and started with the dead man alive drifting toward his doom among the various characters, so that, while I did not cheat or lie, the readers' suspicion kept swinging from one woman to another.

I make no apologies for the mystery element for I have a profound respect for the arts of entertainment,

even of clowning. I was proud when readers went almost frantic about placing the guilt in this story, and the most expert went wrong. The serious side of the book was the effort to portray the very rich and the very poor and the gangster and charity elements as they mingle in New York. I also studied human-motive, showing what evil results proceed from the best motives, and vice versa. I ended the story by sending the heroine to Europe as a nurse, since the war broke out just as I was struggling for a conclusion.

She was, I think, the first of the million or more recent heroines to go forth as a war-nurse.

I now decided to use as an atmosphere the American reaction to the world-war. In *The Thirteenth Commandment,* I tried to portray the intricate intertangling of love and money as they influence human life, the financial convulsions of the war-period furnishing part of the drama. This book was also a plea for the teaching of a trade to every girl for her independence' sake.

We Can't Have Everything was a study of marriages as they really are, and a plea for cheap and easy divorces. Incidentally it was a study in human discontent and a picture of the amazing possibilities the moving-picture world has opened for the quick ascent of unimportant women to wealth and world-wide fame. The hero went to the Mexican Border with his regiment, and the novel ended with the entrance of this country into the European War.

In the meanwhile, I had written a novel, *Clipped Wings,* aiming to be a faithful presentation of the life and motives of actors and actresses, not cheap and

tawdry mummers, not the usual silly caricatures of the stage, but a just picture of the real status of the better theatres. As musicians told me that *Zal* was the only true picture of a musician's soul, so actors told me that this book was the only fair portrait of the stage of our time. It was incidentally an enthusiastic brief for a woman's right to a career apart from family ties.

My novel, *The Unpardonable Sin,* was a study of Americans in Belgium under the German invasion. It was documented to the last degree and written with an earnest desire to keep its passionate emotional procedure true to life and history. It was the last book, I think, that Theodore Roosevelt publicly praised.

My latest novel, *The Cup of Fury,* is a study of Washington during the war and of ship-building as a part of the conflict.

An impairment of hearing condemned me to stay at home when my beloved 69th Regiment went to France, and I was a part of the swivel-chair army for over a year. I thus learned to know Washington all too well.

The novel I am now at work on begins on the day of the false announcement of peace and is a try at a portrayal of the chaos that has followed the war.

These novels, therefore, form a kind of cycle of American emotions and manners during the war.

In a general way, my novels have concerned city life and its more exciting phases; though I keep emphasizing the human, the village side of the metropolis. Some critics praise them as veracious, some assail them as sensational. But I write them with all the earnestness and fidelity of the historian.

My short stories have generally concerned the small towns or the poorer people of the cities. *The Mouth of the Gift Horse* was a picture of village ingratitude to a would-be benefactor; *Immortal Youth* placed a scrub-woman in an art gallery; *The Man that Might Have Been* had a shoe-clerk for a hero; *Canavan* had a street-cleaner: *Baby Talk,* a Greek professor who comes out of the classics into a belated love affair; *The Old Nest,* an old mother who sits at home waiting for her children to come back to see her; *Don't You Care,* a small-town bookkeeper and his dubby wife; *The Last Rose of Summer,* a village old maid who blooms as the other roses droop; *The Lady Who Smoked Cigars,* a prospector's illiterate wife who learned to smoke to keep her lonely husband company; *Pop,* a small-town merchant whose children look down on him; another had a livery stable keeper for a hero; another a butcher, and so on.

A series of stories of middle-class Irish-Americans, published in book form as *Long Ever Ago,* has had extraordinary praise as the truest pictures of these people in fiction. I learned to know the New York Irish through my activity as an officer in the 69th Regiment for twelve years.

Accuracy of dialogue is a mania with me. I believe that everybody has a personal dialect.

I was assistant to George W. Cable when he edited *Current Literature* and he was delighted when I told him that Theocritus wrote his *Idylls,* now in farmer dialect, now in smart city gossip, and now in classic Greek.

Realistic dialogue is a matter of intense scientific

research and nothing pains me more in many novelists of eminence than the absolutely impossible bookish talk they put in the mouths of their characters.

What the people I know actually say and do and wear and spend—all these details of our immediate American life are matters that I approach with the reverence of a witness of sacred gospel.

I had a dazing compliment for a certain story, *Miss 318,* a picture of Christmas from the shop-girl's point of view. It was an attack on the annual shopping orgy because of its cruel follies. I asked the Consumers League for details as to hours, wages, and the facts. A shop-girl told a customer that she wished she could put a copy of it in every parcel. It was played as a vaudeville act for years and it was given as a Christmas play with a hundred performers in a Western city.

A certain book reviewer told me recently that years ago he had planned a story-writing career. Looking about for a field that had not been worked to death, he decided on the department store and took a position in one to learn the life. At nights he studied story-construction. At this time *Miss 318* was published. He said that it told the story of department store life so exhaustively that he threw up his job; and it was such a master-piece of story-construction that he gave up his ambition altogether.

I am not insane enough to take this extravagant tribute seriously, but it was a pleasant recognition of the two poles of my ambition; accuracy and artistry.

Many writers construct with exquisite sense of form; many compile formless documents of great accuracy;

not many seem even to make the effort first to select true human clay and then to shape it with tireless effort at grace of design.

While I strive to despise nothing human, I come nearest to hating the sneerers at our own time, the sophomoric satirists of the American present and the pretty misrepresenters of ancient or medieval realities. Five years' work as assistant editor of a history of the world taught me the essential unity of human nature from prehistoric days to this evening's paper. Incessant and affectionate study of the classics keeps me warm in the belief that true classicism is shown in an intense interest and pride in one's own town and country and generation. I consider scorn to be a proof of ignorance, and I pity the poor critics who pity American art.

What posterity will say of my work, if anything, I can't imagine. I am not writing for posterity. I can only say that I am doing my utmost to make stories that are true in all their essential elements to the spirit and the manner, the speech, the costume, the whims, emotions, moods, and social revolutions of as many of my own people as possible. It is impossible that everybody should approve of any one's work. But the larger my audience grows, the more solemn I.

I strive to keep in touch with the great spiritual storms, the scientific and political progress, the big news, the little gossip, the heroisms of the petty, the pettiness of the heroes, the tears, the slang, the flippancy, the tragedy, the glitter, the pitifulness of as much of my day as my eager little brain and heart can manage.

I hate to go to sleep because I miss some of my brief voyage. I wish I could live a hundred lives and write a hundred times as many novels, stories, poems, essays and articles, though I write much too much as it is. Being so charitably inclined to other people's faults, I recognize my own countless failures and shortcomings with a tenderly, forgiving generosity. And so I stumble on, having a mighty good time; altogether glad to be alive in this greatest period of the world's history, and proud to be permitted to act as a sympathetic chronicler of a few phases of its infinite variety.

THE WORKS OF MR. HUGHES INCLUDE:

The Lakerim Athletic Club (1898), *The Dozen from Lakerim* (1899), *American Composers* (1900), *The Musical Guide* (1903), *Gyges' Ring* (verse) (1901), *The Whirlwind* (1902), *Love Affairs of Great Musicians* (1903), *Songs by Thirty Americans* (1904), *Zal* (1905), *Colonel Crockett's Co-operative Christmas* (1906), *The Lakerim Cruise* (1910), *The Gift Wife* (1910), *Excuse Me* (1911), *Miss 318* (1911), *The Old Nest* (1912), *The Amiable Crimes of Dirk Memling* (1913), *The Lady Who Smoked Cigars* (1913), *What Will People Say?* (1914), *Music Lovers' Cyclopedia*, a revised edition of *The Musical Guide* (1914), *The Last Rose of Summer* (1914), *Empty Pockets* (1915), *Clipped Wings* (1916), *The Thirteenth Commandment* (1916), *In a Little Town* (1917), *We Can't Have Everything* (1917), *The Unpardonable Sin* (1918), *Long Ever Ago* (1918), *The Cup of Fury* (1919).

CHAPTER VII

WINSTON CHURCHILL

"In regard to my people," wrote Mr. Churchill, replying to certain queries of mine, "I am chiefly English, with a strain of Scotch-Irish, and a Dutch strain quite far back, the DeWitts and Van Horns of New York. One of my ancestors was Jonathan Edwards. Another was Margaret Van Horn Dwight, his granddaughter, who wrote the account of a journey across Pennsylvania recently published by the Yale University Press, its date being about 1803. Through her I descended from the Dwights, presidents of Yale. My Churchill ancestor, John, landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1643. On that side I am descended from the Creightons and Osbornes who settled in Portsmouth. The Churchills, my immediate forbears, lived in Portland, Maine, where my great-grandfather, James Creighton Churchill, and his sons were merchants in the West Indies trade, with their own ships and plantations. I was brought up in St. Louis by my mother's sister, where her father's family was established, and educated at private schools and afterwards went to Annapolis, where I graduated in 1894. My interest in literature, however, and especially in American affairs, had grown by that time to such an extent that I resigned from the service at once and almost

immediately began to write *Richard Carvel,* which has to do with Annapolis, being my second book."

Mr. Churchill commenced author with what is (to quote Mr. Arthur B. Maurice) "the somewhat trivial *The Celebrity,* 1898, regarded when it appeared as a satirical hit at the personality of Richard Harding Davis." A trivial book, perhaps, when one is serious, but none-the-less an amusing first novel, one that promised well and that still sells despite its age and our new interests. *The Celebrity*—so we read in the closing sentences—"is still writing books of a high moral tone and unapproachable principle, and his popularity is undiminished." *The Celebrity* may have been the late Mr. Davis; he sounds prophetically like the present Mr. Churchill. For Mr. Churchill's moral tone is something to bring joy to the heart of all those who are interested in uplifting the fallen; and Mr. Churchill's popularity, far from diminishing, appears to increase with the passing of years. And I think this is as it should be, for personally, being of a younger generation, I prefer Mr. Churchill's later books and especially *Coniston* with its study of Jethro Bass, to his earlier books.

Mr. Churchill is, as he himself says, deeply interested in and concerned with American character and experience. With *Richard Carvel,* which was at one time the most popular novel in these United States, he opened a series dramatizing our history; continued in *The Crossing,* which tells of the first great westward emigration through the passes of the Alleghenies; concluded in *The Crisis,* a picture of the struggles between the old North and the old South,

1861-5, localized in St. Louis. Then with *Coniston* and *Mr. Crewe's Career,* which deal with the Boss and the Machine in politics, he turned his attention to the beginnings of the struggle for popular government, which has since become a national movement. And he wrote out of a personal knowledge of conditions; for he was at one time a member of the New Hampshire legislature, 1903-5, and at another, 1912, Progressive candidate for governor. He has, so Mr. Percy Mackaye tells me, done more for the free people of New Hampshire than any other resident of that state, fighting valiantly against graft and intrigue, giving of his time and money.

"Mr. Churchill," according to the late Hamilton Wright Mabie, "draws with a free hand on a large canvas, and his works have epic qualities, emphasizing large and significant movements and defining the place of individuals in them, rather than presenting delicately sketched portraits of men and women in the narrower range of personal experience." He "owes the high position among American contemporary writers of fiction that he holds and has held for nearly two decades," so Mr. Maurice thinks, "to a splendid persistence, an inexhaustible patience, a rigid adherence to his own ideals both in style and substance."

Mr. Churchill was born in St. Louis, Missouri, November 10, 1871, and spent the first sixteen years of his life there. At Annapolis he stood among the first five or six in his class. He helped reorganize the crew, and was for a year crew-captain. He played a good game of football—though his chief outdoor sports have always been fencing, tennis and horseback

riding. For a while after graduation he worked on the *Army and Navy Journal,* and then joined the staff of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine.* In 1895 he married, moving not long after to Cornish, New Hampshire, where he still has his home.

If genius be, as the painstaking insist, an "infinite capacity for taking pains," then, so I am informed, Mr. Churchill "surely illustrates the adage." For instance, he rewrote *Richard Carvel* at least five times. He worked from breakfast until one o'clock, after lunch for two hours or more, and after dinner often far into the night. He was, it seems, ambitious to write the very best that he knew how. Writing became a business, and was treated as such. He joined that strange and humor-lacking tribe that rent offices in some bank building—Mrs. Rinehart and Meredith Nicholson—and go down to them in the morning to await the muse or wrestle with the wrong word. No more the poet in his tavern scrawling immortal testimonies upon a beer check, or the tale-teller with the wind in his face striding the sprite-infested heath. 'Twas in St. Louis—"I have not, however, heard that he (the *Celebrity*) has given way to any more whims."

Approximately two years intervene between one of Mr. Churchill's books and the next. In 1910 he published *A Modern Chronicle,* frankly a modern love story, a study of woman—Honora Leffingwell dominates the story. This was followed by *The Inside of the Cup,* 1913, discussing the religious confusion, the religious needs of to-day, and centering about the Reverend John Hodder, rector of St. John's, and Eldon Parr, financier, one of the bravest and most

significant of Mr. Churchill's characterizations. Followed in 1915 *A Far Country,* and in 1917 *The Dwelling Place of Light,* both fierce and impassioned arraignments of certain materialistic tendencies in present-day American life.

THE WORKS OF WINSTON CHURCHILL:

The Celebrity (1898), *Richard Carvel* (1899), *The Crisis* (1901), *The Crossing* (1904), *Coniston* (1906), *Mr. Crewe's Career* (1908), *A Modern Chronicle* (1910), *The Inside of the Cup* (1913), *A Far Country* (1915), *The Dwelling Place of Light* (1917), *A Traveler in War Time* (1918).

CHAPTER VIII

THEODORE DREISER

There is no mention of Theodore Dreiser in Professor Phelps' latest guide to literature, *The Advance of the English Novel;* no word concerning him in Pancoast's *Introduction to American Literature;* or in Professor Halleck's *History of American Literature;* his work finds no place in *A History of American Literature Since 1870,* written by Professor F. L. Pattee. However, the loss is small, for there is a competent valuation of Dreiser by the late Randolph Bourne in *The Dial,* June 14, 1917; a searching discussion of his work by Lawrence Gilman in *The North American Review,* February, 1916; and, best of all, Mr. Mencken's hilarious and sympathetic preface of 94 pages in *A Book of Prefaces.*

"I have just turned forty," says Mr. Dreiser in *A Traveler at Forty*—he was born at Terre Haute, Indiana, on August 27, 1871. "I have seen a little something of life. I have been a newspaper man,"—he entered newspaper work, on the *Chicago Daily Globe,* June 15, 1892—"editor,"—he was editor of *Every Month,* a literary and musical magazine, from 1895-8; of *Smith's Magazine,* 1905-6; managing editor of *Broadway Magazine,* 1906-7; and editor-in-chief of the Butterick publications, *Delineator, De-*

signer, New Idea, English Delineator, 1907-10, about the time Arnold Bennett, in London, was editor of *Woman*—"magazine contributor, author, and, before these things, several kinds of clerk before I found out what I could do.

"Eleven years ago I wrote my first novel, which was issued by a New York publisher and suppressed by him, Heaven knows why. For the same year they suppressed my book because of its alleged immoral tendencies, they published Zola's *Fecundity* and *An Englishwoman's Love Letters.* I fancy now, after eleven years of wonder, that it was not so much the supposed immorality, as the book's straightforward, plain-spoken discussion of American life in general. We were not used then in America to calling a spade a spade, especially in books. We had great admiration for Tolstoi and Flaubert and Balzac and de Maupassant at a distance—some of us—and it was quite an honor to have handsome sets of these men on our shelves, but mostly we had been schooled in the literature of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Charles Lamb and that refined company of English sentimental realists who told us something about life but not everything. No doubt all these great men knew how shabby a thing this world is—how full of lies, make-believe, seeming and false pretences it all is, but they had agreed among themselves, or with the public, or with sentiment generally, not to talk about that too much. Books were always built out of facts concerning 'our better natures.' We were always to be seen as we wish to be seen. There were villains to be sure—liars, dogs, thieves, scoundrels—but they were strange

creatures, hiding away in dark, unconventional places and scarcely seen save at night and peradventure; whereas we, all clean, bright, honest, well-meaning people, were living in nice homes, going our way honestly and truthfully, going to church, raising our children, believing in a Father, a Son and a Holy Ghost, and never doing anything wrong at any time save as these miserable liars, dogs, thieves, et cetera, might suddenly appear and make us. Our books largely showed us as heroes. If anything happened to our daughters it was not their fault but the fault of these miserable villains. Most of us were without original sin. The business of our books, our church, our laws, our jails, was to keep us so.

"I am quite sure that it never occurred to many of us that there was something really improving in a plain, straightforward understanding of life. For myself I accept now no creeds. I do not know what truth is, what beauty is, what love is, what hope is. I do not believe any one absolutely and I do not doubt any one absolutely. I think people are both evil and well-intentioned."

Ignoring Fielding—whose realism is as honest as his own, whose "immorality" has been as often denounced—Mr. Dreiser is here echoing Fielding's mature convictions concerning life, lending point to Fielding's practice in art. Mr. Dreiser descends directly through Fielding from the Shakespeare of *King Henry the Fourth.*

And it is this attitude of his, this refusal to judge, to come to any final conclusion concerning life—he seems to interpret life as an "uncanny blur of noth-

ingness," in the phrase of Euripides, "a song sung by an idiot, dancing down the wind," or, to quote Macbeth, "a poor player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage"—because his alleged "naturalistic philosophy" stems, not from Zola—of whom he was ignorant until long after the publication of *Sister Carrie*—Flaubert, Augier or the younger Dumas, but from the Greeks, that he so outrages his critics, appears a stranger among the cock-sure prophets who of late have taken to making our novels. I was discussing him with Mr. T. Everett Harré, one time associate editor of *Hampton's* and author of *The Eternal Maiden* and *Behold the Woman!;* Mr. Harré assured me that all this pother about Dreiser was sound and fury, that Mr. Dreiser was easily explained, the author of but one intelligible book—*Sister Carrie,* if I remember rightly; he seemed to think that my interest was the silly curiosity of unsophisticated youth; that going to Mr. Dreiser to learn of life was like going to the Delphic Oracle to hear the riddle of to-morrow explained in riddles even more involved. And the answer was approximately the same no matter whom I questioned—and "What about Dreiser?" was of first importance immediately upon the day when I was commissioned to write this book; it was the one question I invariably asked—"It has puzzled me for years," said Mr. Mencken.

"Novels are a mere expression of temperament anyhow," Mr. Dreiser himself insists. And surely no one ever put more of themselves into their books than he has. There are no reticences such as the shamefaced practice. Why should he elude his reader? Per-

haps. . . . Listen to Mr. Mencken: "Of all the personages in the Dreiser books, the Cowperwood of *The Titan* is perhaps the most radiantly real; he is accounted for in every detail, and yet, in the end, he is not accounted for at all; there hangs about him, to the last, that baffling mysteriousness which hangs about those we know most intimately." The mystery of being—the wonder of life. It envelops Mr. Dreiser; it shrouds the *Twelve Men*—his brother Paul, author of *On the Banks of the Wabash,* Muldoon the trainer, the late Harris Merton Lyon, and Mr. Dreiser's father-in-law—of whom he writes in the latest and one of the best of his books. It is the smile of Mona Lisa; and if it enrages those who must have an answer to every question, it charms the more patient and thoughtful.

No such huge and ungainly figure as the creator of Cowperwood moves on the literary horizon; we see him whole against the sky, his every gesture driving a shadow across the world that separates us, his words echoing down the wind—and yet, 'tis but an outlined figure—the man himself escapes, lonely and alien, . . . but "really I am not a princely soul looking for obsequious service," he tells us. "I am, I fancy, a very humble-minded person, anxious to go briskly forward, not to be disturbed too much and allowed to live in quiet and seclusion. . . . There is in me the spirit of a lonely child somewhere and it clings pitifully to the hand of its big mama, Life, and cries when it is frightened; and then there is a coarse, vulgar exterior which fronts the world defiantly and bids all and sundry to go to the devil. It sneers and

barks and jeers bitterly at times, and guffaws and cackles and has a joyous time laughing at the follies of others."

It all sounds very simple. "We make a great fuss about the past and the future," so he says, "but the actual moment is so often without meaning." We can —some of us—tell you what he was yesterday, as author of *Jennie Gerhardt,* perhaps the most finished of his books; we can make wild guesses as to his future place in literature, but for to-day be cautioned by Mr. Mencken: "*Jennie Gerhardt* is suave, persuasive, well-ordered, solid in structure, instinct with life. *The Financier,* for all its merits in detail, is loose, tedious, vapid, exasperating. But had any critic, in the autumn of 1912, argued thereby that Dreiser was finished, that he had shot his bolt, his discomfiture would have come swiftly, for *The Titan,* which followed in 1914, was almost as well done as *The Financier* was ill done, and there are parts of it which remain to this day the very best writing that Dreiser has ever achieved."

And the best of Dreiser is the best of our time.

Mr. Dreiser's Published Works Include:

Sister Carrie (1900), *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), *The Financier* (1912), *A Traveler at Forty* (1913), *The Titan* (1914), *The Genius* (1915), *Plays of the Natural and the Supernatural* (1916), *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916), *The Hand of the Potter* (tragedy, 1917), *Free and Other Stories* (1918), *Twelve Men* (1919).

CHAPTER IX

MEREDITH NICHOLSON

"When I left school at fifteen, owing to my inability to master algebra," says Mr. Nicholson, "it was with the fixed purpose of becoming a printer. There had been printers in my mother's family; my grandfather Meredith was a printer and a pioneer editor in Indiana. I knew in my youth great numbers of printers, including many of the old *tramp* genus, and I thought them very fine fellows. They knew a lot and I found their cynical philosophy delightful. To know as much as a *print* and wander over the world, *holding cases* in strange cities, struck me as a noble thing . . . but the gods were against me.

"For a time I was employed in a small job office attached to a news stand. There I had full swing at Bonner's *Ledger* and the latest dime novels, but I was a clerk, not an apprentice, and only on rare occasions did I get a chance to sort pi or otherwise toy with the types. I moved to another and bigger establishment, but there again I was thwarted. I was required to push a wheelbarrow through the streets of Indianapolis, piled high with books and stationery, and at seven every morning I gained spiritual strength for this task by sweeping out the counting room and administering to the cuspidors. The performance of

these duties had the effect of stimulating my ambition. I resolved to become a stenographer and practiced the pothooks at night until I found employment in a law office.

"At about seventeen I began to write verse; I wrote a great deal of it. I had been mailing my jingles to all sorts of newspapers and magazines when one day I was highly edified by the receipt of a check for three dollars for a poem called *Grape Bloom* which I had sent to the New York *Mercury*. My recollection of the *Mercury* is very indistinct, but I believe it printed fiction against a background of theatrical and sporting news. For about two years I bought the paper regularly but never saw my verses in print.

"At nineteen I was reading law and I learned a good deal about courts, legal forms and procedure. Born far from tidewater,"—at Crawfordsville, Indiana, December 9th, 1866—"I specialized in admiralty law. The romance of the thing must have caught me, for I ran down all the decisions available in this branch of legal science. With all modesty I assert, pretend and declare that at that period I knew more of the law of the sea than any other Hoosier ever knew.

"At that time James Whitcomb Riley's poems were appearing every Sunday in the Indianapolis *Journal*. I was a stenographer in the law office of William and Lew Wallace, one of many fledgling bards whose work was tacked on to the end of Riley's column. One Saturday Riley, whom I had been worshipping from afar but had never spoken to, appeared suddenly in the law offices carrying a copy of the Cincinnati *En-*

quirer. He pointed to a poem of his own and one of mine that were reproduced in adjoining columns, and said a friendly word about my work. His invaluable friendship to the end of his days may not be described here, but in those years there was a sweetness in his characteristically shy manifestations of good will that are indelibly associated with my memories of him. The first time I ever ate beef-steak and mushrooms he spread the banquet for me, the ostensible purpose being to invite my criticism (I was nineteen!) of a new volume he was preparing for the press.

"My rhyming in the law office didn't prevent a few attempts at story-writing. The Chicago *Tribune* was offering every week a prize of five dollars for a short story of about a column's length. The first one I offered, called *The Tale of a Postage Stamp,* earned the five. I immediately wrote several others which did not, however, take the prize. The short story didn't interest me particularly, and after a second had been printed in the Chicago *Current,* an ambitious literary journal that was braving the airs of Chicago just then, and a third in the *McClure Syndicate,* I didn't write, or even try writing, short stories until about six years ago.

"Having mastered maritime law, I skipped the rest and became a reporter.

"This was good fun and I kept at newspaper work for twelve years. Then I took a flyer in business and was for three years auditor and treasurer of a coal-mining corporation in Colorado. But all this time I had been writing something, prose or verse, and in

Colorado I wrote a historical book which is my longest seller. I was so elated to find that I had indeed become an author that I chucked the coal business and a very good salary and began to write novels, essays, and all sorts of other things. In my experiments with literature I have been both serious and frivolous. The only way to have a good time as a writer is to do the thing that interests you at the moment. As I have a journalistic sort of mind, I have dropped fiction many times to write an essay on some such subject as Should Smith Go to Church? or The Second-Rate Man in Politics."

And yet Mr. Nicholson would have me believe that his career as a writer has been "sadly lacking in the element of adventure." We have all of us read *The House of the Thousand Candles;* we have most of us read *The Port of Missing Men, The Siege of the Seven Suitors, The Madness of May,* and *Otherwise Phyllis.* Not that they are literature or of abiding interest, but that they are carefully told tales, easy to read, charming an evening before the fire. To have so aptly touched the public taste is no mean accomplishment; to have known Riley intimately, to have written of his life in *The Poet* is in itself something of an adventure. What would Mr. Nicholson? The romantic existence of Byron? the far-traveled life of Kipling? the loves of Ovid? The making of books is a sedentary profession—your truck-driver as a rule knows more of life . . . "but I have tackled nearly everything except a play," says Mr. Nicholson—what truck driver dare make so brave an assertion?

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE TITLES OF MR. NICHOLSON'S NOVELS:

Short Flights (poems, 1891), *The Hoosier* (1900), *The Main Chance* (1903), *Zelda Dameron* (1904), *The House of a Thousand Candles* (1905), *Poems* (1906), *The Port of Missing Men* (1907), *Rosaline of Red Gate* (1907), *The Little Brown Tug at Kildane* (1908), *The Lords of High Decision* (1909), *The Siege of the Seven Suitors* (1910), *A Hoosier Chronicle* (1912), *The Provincial American* (essays, 1913), *Otherwise Phyllis* (1913), *The Poet* (1914), *The Proof of the Pudding* (1916), *The Madness of May* (1917), *a Reversible Santa Claus* (1917), *The Valley of Democracy* (essays, 1918).

CHAPTER X

SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

"Know, sir," says Samuel Hopkins Adams, "that war à la Sherman has pitchforked me into the job of a farmer's chore boy. The farmer for whom I work is also named Adams, and under her stern governance I have learned much, though by no means all, of the art of agriculture. I can now address a pig in terms suitable to his status and value on the hoof; I can wait on a cow with tact and decorum; I can persuade a reluctant hen to practice antirace suicide over a china door knob—a dazzling life! Looking back, autobiographically, upon more easeful days, I recall that I was born too near 1870"—at Dunkirk, N. Y., January 26, 1871—"to be young any longer, and am therefore well along in what Mrs. Gertrude Atherton calls the splendid, idle Forties. My first literary effort was a critique upon the faculty of Hamilton College, so brilliant in manner that it got me fired. Since then I have published ten books, but nothing equal in effect upon my environment to that early masterpiece. With the aid of *Collier's* I once haled Peruna, Duffy's Malt, Swamp Root, and other patent devices for interior decoration before the bar of public opinion—they had previously enjoyed a conspicuous and profitable position in other bars—and gave them what their proprie-

tors confidently asserted would be a large amount of effective and valuable free advertising. I understand they still consider the advertising to have been free and effective, but have revised their views as to its value."

He might almost be called the author of the Pure Food Laws; and out of his fight against patent medicine frauds started his greater campaign for honest advertising. He has written on tuberculosis, typhoid fever, yellow fever, the "Nostrum Evil," "the Specialist Humbug," "Preying on Incurables." Because of the theory of journalism which he set forth in *The Clarion,* a novel in which a newspaper is hero and villain, the *New York Tribune* in the fall of 1914 asked him to write a short series of articles on advertising conditions in the local field. In his novel he had especially stressed the relations existing between a newspaper and its advertisers. It was intended to explain the reasons for the *Tribune's* new policy of guaranteeing its own advertising to the reader, guaranteeing satisfaction to the consumer in the purchase of any article advertised in its columns. "The articles," says Mr. Adams, "stirred up much comment and more enmity—the experiment was at the time quite new in the field of daily journalism and has not since been followed, so far as I am aware, by any important daily in this country. They dealt, with a frankness somewhat starling to the advertiser who had always deemed himself immune from criticism on account of his heavy expenditures in the papers, with various phases of paid exploitation of merchandise, from the out-and-out swindles, medical and financial, to the exaggera-

tions and misrepresentations indulged in by some of the largest and most representative mercantile concerns in the city. Before the twelve original articles were finished, we had caught so many and such large bears by the tail, and were trailing or being trailed by so many more—including two of New York's great department stores, one of the big theatrical syndicates, and several rival publishers—that it was impossible to let go. The series ran on into the following Spring, when I left for a trip to South America and the smaller West Indies. The call of fiction was pulling at me again, and I dropped journalistic polemics and wrote *The Unspeakable Perk,* the scene of which is laid in one of those quaint and colorful tropical 'republics' which have strongly appealed to my imaginative sense since first I became acquainted with that part of the world.

"On my return, some months later, I found the advertising fight which I had started still raging—and was swiftly drawn back into it. What with new issues cropping up, libel suits coming due—the sum total of damages from suits aggregating some three millions was a modest six cents, a discouraging result to our opponents who had held the comfortable theory that advertising, good or bad, was nobody's business but the advertiser's—and the principles of sound advertising spreading in various parts of the country, I was kept busy writing, addressing advertising and commercial organizations, and generally doing propaganda work along these lines until the war broke out.

"I had meantime cherished in my mind the idea of setting down in a series of stories the casual record

of a quaint and lovable locality which I had known well on the east side of New York—this book, *Our Square,* was quite aside from my main line of interest, which has always been the American newspaper as an institution. To that I have come back in my latest novel, *Common Cause,* which portrays the newspaper in its struggle to maintain its independence against forces which seek to employ it as an agency for alien, and in this case anti-American, propaganda. The underlying theme is essentially the same as that of *The Clarion:* that is, the persistent and perhaps inevitable effort to use the newspaper press for ulterior purposes and thus to divert it from its one proper function of informing public opinion. There inheres in this effort an intense and dramatic struggle which has its effect upon practically every phase of our national life."

And of course, as an artist (as Mr. Montrose J. Moses has pointed out), Mr. Adams has fallen into the snare of the over-zealous sociological worker; there is scarce a page in his books that is inactive or freed of the necessity to drive home the evils of something or other; there is not a chapter (save in *Our Square*) which does not offer some antidote to our present ills; he is everlastingly instructing his reader, up-lifting, bettering America; he is an evangelist, speaking in parables.

He lives and works for the most part in the country, near Auburn, N. Y. Immediately upon finishing college, 1891, he joined the *New York Sun,* an all-round reporter, especially good at humorous and descriptive stories. In 1900 he graduated from the *Sun* and took

post-graduate courses with the McClure newspaper syndicate as manager, as advertising manager of McClure, Phillips & Co., and later on the staff of *McClure's Magazine*. Then in 1905 he branched out for himself as an independent writer and publicist. He has since become one of the Committee of One Hundred on National Health, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Consumers' League, a member of the National Confederation of Charities, the National Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, etc.

"Of solid build," says Mr. Moses, "a blond of extremely clear skinned type, of medium height, and with a look that betokens alertness and aliveness, Mr. Adams is a typical American"—whatever that may be. "He is quick of speech, showing the rapidity of clear thinking, and the importance of a subject is measured by the length of silence before he answers. But when he does speak he loves plain talk; there are flashes in his conversation, as there are passages in *The Clarion* and his other novels, that show his kinship to the sociological interests of Brieux as revealed in *Damaged Goods,* and as exemplified by Shaw in *Widowers' Houses*. . . . But Mr. Adams has neither the artistry of the one nor the volatile humor of the other." He is primarily a journalist, an honorable prophet, a Tolstoy with a quaint conception of *What is Art?*

CHAPTER XI

HAMLIN GARLAND

"Please," said Mr. Hamlin Garland, when I wrote for the words of Sir James Barrie in praise of *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly,* a novel also praised by the late Mr. Henry James, "please do not think I am under any illusions as to my own work. I have had so much to contend with that I have only in one or two books had the full leisure and freedom from care which gave me satisfying results. One of these is, of course, *A Son of the Middle Border*—I took my time to that."

A Son of the Middle Border is (by many) considered Mr. Garland's best and most finished work. Written after the manner of Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung,* it is fictional autobiography—"the memorial of a generation," says Mr. Howells; "as rich in vivid pictures, sounds, motions, people, moods as an idyll by Theocritus," says the generous and whole-hearted Major Hughes; undoubtedly a difficult task carried to a noble conclusion—one of those rare volumes which give, as does Boswell's *Johnson,* a full-length portrait of the artist, a man standing out whole among his fellows.

"His men of the high trails," says Mr. Howells, reviewing *Other Main Travelled Roads,* "his miners and hunters, his scouts and rangers, have the reach and lift

of the vast spaces and lofty summits where their lives are mostly passed; but their humanness, not their heroism, is offered as the precious thing. Their contact with the civilization of the East as it penetrates on business or pleasure to their primitive Westernness forms one of the author's opportunities of drama which you can trust him not to abuse to the effects of melodrama. The loves of these mighty fellows, and their gain or loss of the daughters of wealth adventuring in their wilderness, is poetry of a wonted strain, heard from the beginning of romance in tales of adventure, but the love-making which goes hand in hand and heart to heart with danger and death inspires no emotion from the reader unworthy of the happiness which sweet and pure love can give. If this is negative praise, it is praise that can be awarded to few novelists of a day tending to lose itself in a twilight of the decencies. . . . He is always in his more exalted moods, longing to make you sensible of the mighty spaciousness of the land whose immeasurable grandeur submits itself to the hand of the prospector, the rancher, the outlaw, as it had submitted itself to the grasp of the savage hunter and warrior. Words cannot give the sense of its loneliness, its mightiness, but these people are somehow equal to the conditions of thirty miles to a doctor, and as many to a justice of the peace. . . . Mr. Garland has measurably succeeded to the place in the sunset held by Bret Harte and Mark Twain. It is not necessary that he should have displaced the earlier sovereigns of that realm; but there was room for him near them. One cannot claim for him the invention of such types as Harte's

romanticistic imagination bodied forth, or the creations of that potent humor of Mark Twain which began to people our world fifty or sixty years ago with the 'vast forms that move fantastically' before the eyes of alien observance. It is not in the direct line of those potent humorists that Mr. Garland is of their succession. Fun does not primarily seek expression from him; it breaks from him involuntarily, and he does not create, so much as recognize, the grotesque. He does not permit himself the license of those humorists in the life he paints. . . ."

All this is lavish praise, earned (I presume), since there is none to dispute with him his claims as third of the sanest to deal with the West; yet is Mr. Garland very far from being either Bret Harte or Mark Twain—though not so far, surely, as most. In *Main Travelled Roads* he attains and holds to a high level of excellence, drawing his figures in bold, broad lines, placing them well, translating their lives into motion and speech—they are as they might have been seen by invisible eyes—but not "high fantastical," gorgeous with the genius of Twain, immortal fools of Harte's Puck-like fancy. In *The Captain of the Grey Horse Troop,* apart from the story, dramatic and sure, Mr. Garland gives a picture of frontier life such as he alone seems capable of giving, army post life, life on the plains—but there is more to Huck Finn than life: a distortion such as is rare in literature. . . . Yet is it proper that Mr. Garland be highly praised, for in our careless day his influence has always been for the good of letters—and having lived the life, he

is surely the foremost of those now writing of the pioneer—and the most honest.

Mr. Garland was born, September 16, 1860, on a farm near the present site of West Salem, Wisconsin. His father, Richard Garland, was a native of Oxford County, Maine; his mother, Isabelle McClintock, a native of Coshocton County, Ohio. In 1868 the family moved across the Mississippi into Winneshick County, Iowa; and a year later, they moved out into the prairie in Mitchell County, Iowa, the scene of Mr. Garland's *Boy Life on the Prairie* and of many of the stories in *Main Travelled Roads.* When about sixteen years of age Mr. Garland became a pupil at the Cedar Valley Seminary at Osage, though working (as usual) six months of the year on the farm. He graduated in 1881, and for a year tramped through the Eastern States. Then, his people having settled in Brown County, Dakota, he drifted back in the spring of 1883, and took up a claim in Macpherson County, where he lived for a year, studying the world about him; but in the fall of the next year, he sold his claim and came East, to Boston, intending to further fit himself for teaching. He made a helpful friend in Professor Moses True Brown, and became a pupil (later an instructor) in the Boston School of Oratory, where during the years 1885-9 he taught private classes in English and American Literature, lecturing meanwhile in and around the city on Browning, Shakespeare, the Drama, etc. In 1887 he revisited his people in Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin—a trip which led him to write and in 1890 to publish *Main Travelled Roads.* The next year, while again travelling in the West, he wrote

his first long novel, *A Spoil of Office.* In 1892 he gave up his home in Boston and went to New York City for the winter; and in 1893 transferred his literary headquarters to Chicago, the same fall buying a house in his native village—where has been the Garland homestead ever since; where he spends a part of each year mountain travelling, making studies for his novels: *The Eagle's Heart, Money Magic, Cavanagh, Forest Ranger.*

In the spring of 1894 Mr. Garland published his first (and, I believe, only) volume of essays, *Crumbling Idols*—the next year completing *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly,* and launching upon a life of General Grant, which was to consume two years of his time and be published in 1898, together with a volume of short stories. Immediately thereafter Mr. Garland left overland for a trip into the Yukon Valley, resulting in *The Trail of the Gold Seekers.* In 1899 he married Zulime Taft, daughter of Don Carlos Taft and sister to Lorado Taft, the sculptor. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and was founder and first president of the Cliff Dwellers, probably the leading artistic and literary club of the West.

He gives one the impression of a man—interested, of course, in the technique of art as the groundwork on which to build the temple of one's faith in life—primarily concerned with the reality of man's achievements. His conversation turns about life. He will talk through the afternoon, anecdote and quoted observation, of John Muir, John Burroughs, the explorer Stephanson. These are the men he chooses for his friends—men whose active adventures, thought-

fully planned, end in knowledge to be detailed honestly, with all the persuasion of art, for the consideration of others. He is himself, some five foot nine in height, of slim athletic build, and, in quieter tones, lacking the mad intensity of eye and nerve, somewhat resembles the portraits of Nietzsche, with thick graying hair, bushy brows and drooping mustache. He has too that air of the philosopher which comes of being much alone with books, whether in the library or among the hills.

HAMLIN GARLAND'S WORKS INCLUDE:

Main Travelled Roads, Jason Edwards, A Little Norsk, Prairie Folks, A Spoil of Office, A Member of the 3d House, Crumbling Idols, Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, Wayside Courtships, Ulysses Grant, Prairie Songs, The Spirit of Sweetwater, The Eagle's Heart, Her Mountain Lover, The Captain of the Gray Horse Troop, Hesper, Light of the Star, The Tyranny of the Dark, The Long Trail, Money Magic, Boy Life on the Prairie, The Shadow World, Cavanagh Forest Ranger, Victor Olnee's Discipline, Other Main Travelled Roads, A Son of the Middle Border.

CHAPTER XII

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

I have it—on whose authority I know not—it has become almost an adage, dating (apparently) from the beginnings of our culture—that, on occasion, Homer nodded above his scrawled chirography and half-asleep wrote what must, judged critically, be pronounced nonsense such as one (anxious for the perfection of art) would prefer to think him guiltless of; I know that there are sentences in Shakespeare which, without the toning of a thousand editors, the damned (with all eternity through which to fret) might never hope to parse—and I am giving it as nothing but the personal idiosyncrasy of G. G. that he delights, and has for years delighted, in the books of Mr. Stewart Edward White; that he reads them with an avidity, a hail-fellow feeling, such as the awesome classics seldom inspire, such as one feels when tramping the woods.

Nor is this all, for while upon his shortcomings, it is well to point out that, though he recognizes in Major Rupert Hughes a critic who does not always stop to think—as in a letter to me acknowledging my mention of Cibber and Pope and Richardson as remembered detractors of the buoyant Harry Fielding, Major Hughes himself confesses, most disarmingly—he knows of but few short stories as happy as those in

Long Ever Ago, of not many he would trade for *Miss 318* . . . unless they be in Mr. White's *Arizona Nights* or *Simba.*

(And, since digressions are in order, it is well to point out to those who listen to Mr. George Moore as I might to the Abbott of Thelema, that that orchid of our decadence, quite often, perverts the truth as wilfully as did Rabelais; and that when he says that Mr. Henry James went to Europe and read *Turgenev,* whereas Mr. Howells stayed home and read *Henry James,* he has said nothing—not simply because it is not necessary to go to Europe to read *Turgenev,* nor because Mr. Howells spent a number of years in Spain and Italy—but because there should be no comparison between the two, no necessity for abasing one to exalt the other, no more in common than there is between Dickens and Thackeray; they are poles apart as the great invariably are, for it is test of greatness that men stand out, individual, apart from their fellows. As Mr. White stands apart among the men who make our novels, a sportsman whose diary, unlike Turgenev's, extends to several volumes, and deals with mighty hunters after gold as well as game, at home and abroad.)

And so to a consideration of *The Silent Places,* that snow-blinded following of an Indian cheat up into the frozen night of the Arctic—or of *The Blazed Trail,* along which Harry Thorpe travels out of his forests to the house of his April Lady that he may admit himself wrong; there are greater things in life than the hardly won conquest of nature—or of *The Westerners,* of Jim Buckley and Alfred and Billy Knapp, of the wagon train they convoy through the Black Hills,

and of the breed Michael Lafond, who was revenged upon them for his exclusion from the party—of *The Claim Jumpers* and *The Riverman,* Bobby Orde—of *The Gray Dawn* and *Gold,* detailing with a freshness, with incidental fictions that heighten the wonder, the beginnings of history in the Golden West—of *The Leopard Woman* and the first fumblings of war among the white men and natives of Central Africa—of *Simba,* short stories that photograph and retouch the mystery, the agony, the cruelty and marvel of hunting and camping along the Congo and out upon the plains west of Nairobi—of such trifles as *The Life of the Winds of Heaven,* that mocking idyll of the North woods, of *Billy's Tenderfoot* and such heroic shooting as must astound the most hardened of cinema-fans, of The Two Gun man in *Arizona Nights,* and Jed Parker and Buck Johnson and (to speak roughly, as suits the company) hundreds upon hundreds of others; punchers and rustlers and nesters, the "girl in red" and the "girl who got rattled," prospectors and miners and foremen, Indians, Africans, Germans, and (best of celestials) the philosophical Chink—cook, bottle-washer, and noblest maker of cake—the Ganymede of the West;—of Kingozi, mightiest of Nimrod's successors; of Winkelman, the German explorer and spy; of Roaring Dick Darrell and the scaler FitzPatrick—and of women not a few; portraits and sketches in which the once-upon-a-time lives in our policed and polished unadventurousness.

Mr. Stewart Edward White writes out of a vast self-made experience, draws his characters from a wide acquaintance with men, recalls situations and inci-

dents through years of forest tramping, hunting, exploring in Africa and the less visited places of our continent, for the differing occasions of his books. In his boyhood he spent a great part of each year in lumber camps and on the river. He first found print with a series of articles on birds, *The Birds of Mackinac Island* (he was born in Grand Rapids, March 12, 1873), brought out in pamphlet form by the Ornithologists' Union and since (perforce) referred to as his "first book." In the height of the gold rush he set out for the Black Hills, to return East broke and to write *The Claim Jumpers* and *The Westerners.* He followed Roosevelt into Africa, *The Land of Footprints* and of *Simba.* He has, more recently, seen service in France as a Major in the U. S. Field Artillery. Though (certainly) no Ishmael, he has for years been a wanderer upon the face of the earth, observant and curious of the arresting and strange—and his novels and short stories mark a journey such as but few have gone upon, a trailing of rainbows, a search for gold beyond the further hills and a finding of those campfires (left behind when Mr. Kipling's *Explorer* crossed the ranges beyond the edge of cultivation) round which the resolute sit to swap lies while the tenderfoot makes a fair—and forced—pretense at belief.

THE WORKS OF STEWART EDWARD WHITE:

The Westerners, The Claim Jumpers, The Blazed Trail, Conjuror's House, The Forest, The Magic Forest, The Silent Places, The Mountains, Blazed Trail Stories, The Pass, The Mystery, The Leopard Woman, Simba, Arizona Nights, Camp and Trail, The

Riverman, The Rules of the Game, The Cabin, The Adventures of Bobby Orde, The Land of Footprints, African Camp Fires, Gold, The Rediscovered Country, The Gray Dawn, The Forty-Niners.

CHAPTER XIII

SAMUEL MERWIN

Under date of Washington's birthday, 1919, Mr. Henry Kitchell Webster, author of *The Thoroughbred* and *The Real Adventure,* wrote to me from London, saying that my letter, forwarded from his home in Evanston, had reached him too late for him to comply, etc.—"Too bad," he said, "but I shall have to get on as best I can without being made famous."

Mr. Webster mistakes my purpose—I have no facilities for carrying coals to Newcastle. So I appealed to Mr. Merwin, who knows and understands Mr. Webster.

"The Short Line War," he answered, "deals with the lurid piratical railway days of Jim Fiske, J. Gould, et al. Webster and I wrote it together (as we also wrote *Calumet "K"* and *Comrade John*), because we were both boyhood friends with literary aspirations in common. Perhaps also because we were in our very early twenties at the time. Before that, we had tried to write (together) operas, both comic and grand, books of foolish verse, and all sorts of youthful nonsense."

They had both been born in Evanston: Mr. Webster, September 7, 1875; and Mr. Merwin on October 6 of the year previous in a little frame house on Orrington Avenue,—to grow up in a lot of other

houses, and to attend Northwestern University, and (I trust I am not too sanguine) to be made famous by me . . . to the amazement of Mr. Webster.

I had been reading *The Charmed Life of Miss Austin*—" 'We can't leave the girl alone—in Shanghai,' protested the thin woman. 'But she'll be right here in a hotel full of white folks,' insisted the stout man." —I had been reading of the Peking Pug, of Charlie Snyder and Wanda of the Mysteries, watching the Chinese storekeeper counting out great heaps of gold sovereigns, hearing Mr. Wilbery, as he sat right down on the sharp side of the steamer-trunk, sigh "Thank God!"—I had been having an interesting but rather wild time——

"Yes," Mr. Merwin said, "you are quite right. I used to think only of the story, now I think almost entirely of character. I suppose that is because I was young then and am older now."

So I turned to Anthony the Absolute, followed the wretched Crocker up and down the Chinese Coast, into (as was to be expected) forbidden dens and houses where slant-eyed lassies, trained to allure, asked with pathetic smiles, "You no lovee me?"—We were searching for Crocker's wife; that is, he and Anthony were; I was but a looker-on—for the wife Héloise who had run away. Anthony was presumably, and surely, collecting folk songs. But, some time later, in the room next to his, at the Hotel de Chine, in Peking, he heard a girl singing. . . . And there, in self-defense, he had to kill Crocker. . . . Mr. Merwin spent several months in China and knows the country at first hand. He describes it as an eye-witness, and makes of

Crocker a proper jealous husband of the T. B. M. type, the lobster of the chorus girl who, despite his own philanderings, insists upon the strict chastity of his own wife with such a brutality of emphasis that were she other than she is, he must surely drive her into the arms of another man for comfort.

"But any attempt," Mr. Merwin said, "to formulate my philosophy of writing in cold words will necessarily be a failure from the start. However, I will try in this; I have a passion for people, for the movement and color and bewildering, constantly changing contrasts of life. I love life and living, growing things. I do not care for social or aristocratic distinction in life or in letters. I am afraid I like poor people, unfortunate people, who have to struggle against the current of life and who, perhaps, sometimes, here and there, gain a foot or two or an inch or two against that current. . . ."

Then I turned to *The Honey Bee.* The scene shifts to Paris. In a taxi I accompany Miss Hilda Wilson, buyer for a large American department store, to the offices of the American Express Company to get her mail. There we meet up with a dancing girl from the Ambassadeurs and with Mr. Blink Moran, a prize-fighter. But the words all have a new meaning. There is a frailty of autumn beauty in the sentences, a grace not seen before—feeling and reticence and ease. And I leave Mr. Moran, the most thoughtful of wanderers, and Miss Wilson and the child they have adopted, after various adventures, with a question. . . .

"You ask," said Mr. Mervin, "if words have for

me a charm of their own. The answer is Yes, decidedly. I love the little distinctions in the meanings and in the emphasis of common words and their variants. But, as I have confessed to that passion for living, growing things, so I love the growing language in all its constantly changing new phases and freshly coined bits of speech. This brings me down sometimes pretty close to the slang of the minute. For this reason none of those critics or followers of current literature, who live in the past and cling with dignity and determination to the settled, established, prosperous word, will ever credit me with the slightest feeling for style. Though I have such, I think."

I think so, too—style is not the mould of form, cramping a man's thought to certain set phrases, old saws, accepted idioms, but the gesture of personality.

"Viola Roseboro," Mr. Merwin continued, "once said that the American idea in literature is something as nearly as possible like something that was once done well. I concur in this characterization of our unconscious literary snobs, and prefer to remain with one foot outside the pale."

All this adds immensely to my interest in *Temperamental Henry* and *Henry is Twenty;* for here he is taking one character, a possible character through quite possible experiences with a new power, a growing power over his speech. Mr. Merwin believes that he is now just beginning. While his earlier books, *The Citadel* and the rest, are not exactly wild oats, they were primarily pastime and (for him) a training to see and express.

"The life I see about me," he said, "is bewildering

in its contrasts, its movements, its color. The only philosophy of life—of personal life, that is—that I have could perhaps be best expressed this way; that I hope to keep in the rush along what I always think of as a sense of direction. Nothing is fixed to me, nothing settled. In writing I must confess to a minor passion for surface color and contrast. Thus, in *The Charmed Life of Miss Austin,* which was frankly light enough in subject matter, I loved describing Shanghai at night and the details of costume of the Chinese girl 'behind the screen.' I liked the big, dignified Mandarin, who had played third base at Yale, yet remained a Chinaman. In these recent books I have been doing about the boy, Henry Calverly, I have loved giving, or trying to give a picture of the old town of the nineties back in Illinois; and I have loved the people—all the minor characters of those stories—including the ones I didn't like. You will understand that.

"I wish it were possible to express in a letter something of one's more serious philosophy. But, of course, it isn't possible. I will have to hope that you will catch some bits of that from my books. I am not a Victorian, except in spots. To me man is not a fallen angel, but a rising animal. And I find it inspiring to think how high he has already risen, and how bright his hopes are for further growth and development.

"And still one last thing. I have said (I think in *Anthony the Absolute*), 'Books are pale things.' That, of course, is true. Our accepted fiction—our best fiction—tends to the thin, squeamish, upper-class,

over-refined. I believe that there was a profound reason for the Jack London sort of thing. Perhaps the war has taught a few of us that life is immensely nearer the primitive than we had dared to think these past few generations. Life, as I see it, is quite largely what, in fiction, by parroty little critics, would be classed as melodrama. I saw Walter Hampden play *Hamlet* last week and was struck again by the fact that *Hamlet* is melodrama seen through a mind. Henry James knew that life is melodrama. Balzac knew it and De Maupassant, and the exuberant, but pretty real Dickens. . . ."

Yet, in person, Mr. Merwin seems not the least bit melodramatic; short and stout with wide eyes behind huge bone-rimmed glasses, he is suburban America—the man who (for exercise) mows the lawn and works about the garden in the cool of the evening, for business during the day, in the sweat of his brow, does his darnedest to produce something that, besides being an honest and (to the best of his ability) good piece of work, shall please the public to whom he sells. Mr. Merwin is not in the least theatric, not at all the wild and unrestrained "popular novelist of the stage." In fact, I have a notion that he is (with Mr. William Allen White) the best neighbour in the world.

THE WORKS OF HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER INCLUDE:

The Short Line War (with Samuel Merwin), *The Banker and the Bear, The Story of a Corner in Land, Calumet "K"* (with Samuel Merwin), *Roger Drake, Captain of Industry, The Whispering Man, A King in Khaki, The Sky Man, The Girl in the Other Seat, The*

Ghost, Girl, the Butterfly, The Real Adventure, The Painted Scene, Comrade John (with Samuel Merwin), *The Duke of Cameron Avenue, Traitor and Loyalist, The Thoroughbred.*

THE WORKS OF SAMUEL MERWIN INCLUDE:

The Short Line War (with Henry Kitchell Webster), *Calumet "K"* (with Henry Kitchell Webster), *The Road to Frontenac, The Whip Hand, His Little World, The Merry Anne, The Road Builders, Comrade John* (with Henry Kitchell Webster), *Drugging a Nation, The Citadel, The Charmed Life of Miss Austin, Anthony the Absolute, The Honey Bee, The Trufflers, Temperamental Henry.*

CHAPTER XIV

ALLAN UPDEGRAFF

In an essay on Sir Philip Sidney, Francis Thompson points out that a peculiar interest (naturally) attaches to poets who have written prose, "who can both soar and walk"; and elsewhere, speaking of Shakespeare, he says that "it might almost be erected into a rule that a great poet is, if he please, also a master of prose."

A great poet perhaps. The assurance of *Wilhelm Meister* is as compelling as the genius of *Faust;* the speech of Falstaff no whit less arresting than the dreaming words of Romeo; the charm of Shelley's letters as far removed from the stereotyped correspondence of the average as is *Adonais* from the elegies of a New England churchyard; and the tales of Poe (to cite an American) are as beguiling as the most haunting of his verse. But minor poets. . . .

Mr. Allan Updegraff is a poet. In early youth, with the brave faith of inexperience, he lived, uncertainly, from day to day, down on Avenue B, from the scant earnings of an occasional rhyme. Though he would have me believe that he has "done nothing save two rather dubious novels, neither of which attracted much attention," he is quoted at length in Professor Phelps' recent volume on English poetry—yet his prose, often felicitous and turning with unexpected

daring upon the glittering surface of a phrase, simple, straight-forward and to the point, is (at times) as uninspired as the gossip of a neighbor. The haste of his writing is too often apparent. He fills his paragraphs with easy, careless sentences, flooding the page with the eager exuberance of a boy picking apples from a convenient tree; he too seldom lingers, an idler, stretched out in the shade, munching the fruit of contemplation. And he will interrupt a scene keyed to that minor chord upon which Mr. Leonard Merrick plays so skilfully, in *The Bishop's Comedy* and *Whispers About Women,* to introduce burlesque variations as trivial and discordant as the practice of a village band. Yet he is a writer of great promise, of a pleasant humor, sweetening the bitter wine of irony with a deathless faith in woman, making soft the answers of a somewhat disillusioned dreamer as he notes the gay good-fellowship, the homely, natural speech of ordinary men and women. He has a liking for crowds, an ear for the apt phraseology of slang, an eye for the unfeigned gestures of every day.

He was born on a farm near Grinnell, Iowa, February 24th, 1883, his father, a "high-class farmer," who had been intended for the ministry; his mother, a painter of landscapes and author of children's stories, of French descent. Of pioneering stock, there is a beat of gypsy music in his heart—and at eighteen he ran away to Chicago from Springfield, Missouri, where he had finished high school, to seek a fortune in the great world. He got a job reporting on the *South Chicago Daily Calumet,* became city editor, but chance offering, left to enter Yale where he was later

editor-in-chief of the *Monthly Magazine.* His funds ran out, and he was forced to go to New York to earn a living. He attempted almost anything and everything that offered, clerking for Siegel-Cooper's, working in bookstores and in a factory, but was ordered West to California, facing consumption with a borrowed twenty dollars, by a doctor to whom a chance friend had sent him. He arrived in Ogden, skin and bones, talking to himself, broke, the *Oxford Book of English Verse* in his pocket; he went to work "mucking" for the Northern Pacific, contracted in a small way, and later returned to New York to help edit *Transatlantic Tales*—his poetry and short stories were beginning to attract attention—with a strengthened physique and something of a literary reputation. He was, for a brief period, editor of the *Publishers' Newspaper Syndicate,* is at present with the *Literary Digest,* but for the most part he resides at Woodstock, among the hills of Central New York, writing novels.

And his novels are extremely interesting. Mr. Updegraff has read Turgenieff to some purpose. The impudent exaggeration of such a fabulous romance as, in *Second Youth,* opens the eyes of the virginal (if middle-aged) Mr. Roland Francis to the sensual charm of Mrs. Adelaide Winton Twombly has about it something of the piquant allure of continental intrigue, the colour of Flaubert, the cynic gaiety of De Maupassant —an echo, perhaps, of those crowded months when he read manuscript and translated from the French, German and Italian—the result, certainly, of knowing Turgenieff. Mrs. Twombly, grown contemptuous of all passion, real or assumed in the selfishness of desire,

still smarting from the brutal frankness of a too insistent husband, enters McDavitt's Department Store ostensibly to buy silks but in reality to seduce the heart of the handsome and proper Mr. Francis (behind the counter) with talk of philosophy and the earthiness of worms, silk or what you will. He is to her as the salesgirl to the young gallant in search of a "time." He has been waiting, she knows, through unadvancing years for the True Romance. She will (turning the tables on the male) degrade his dreams to the sordid reality of a fleshy moment—and so be avenged on the sex which broke and disillusioned her. She fails, of course. When, in the hotel room, lip should meet with lip to seal a vain hope of eternal faith, her courage deserts her—and she sends him away, strangely troubled by a love he cannot realize, to forget if he can, to wander through the night home alone. He lives to encounter the various hazards that beset an unattached bachelor suddenly promoted to the buying staff of a huge retail business—the interested friendship of his widowed landlady, the dinners of his chief, the fluttering smiles of marriageable daughters; but he comes at long last into a quiet place where he can rest with one beside him, singing an old, old song —a wilderness for you or me, but for him Paradise enow.

Mr. Updegraff knows the people of whom he writes, nevertheless his novels are rather as a tale that is told than the record of vivid experience. This is especially noticeable in *Strayed Revellers*—though Hen Hoot, the father of Clothilde, is "more directly lifted from life than are most characters in novels," a farmer, ex-

actly the sort of person one might wish for the father of an extremely modern young lady. Mr. Updegraff is no untravelled Ulysses coming suddenly upon Circe around the bend of a mountain stream or among the cloth-banked aisles of a department store—yet his chief persons are naïve, daring as wholesome children are daring, dancing to unconventional music played fantastically upon a penny whistle. *Strayed Revellers* is concerned with the adventure of Clothilde in search of her father—her mother having been married by the Reverend Percy Westbrook, a deliverer from sin, though she had in a moment of abandon given herself to another; it is an extravaganza, a satire on the fads of the more advanced of Greenwich Villagers, a romance dressed in the motley of masquerade. There is about Clothilde the grace of all natural growing things, the frank mischievous gaiety of youth—she is out of a book, at once alive and make-believe, whimsical and amusing, an upland sprite; but Hen Hoot has all the patient wisdom of Sancho Panza, the reality of rock—Mr. Updegraff may well be proud of him.

And of his next novel. It is yet in embryo. Over six feet of immense build and breadth, for all the world like a half-brother to Mr. Dreiser, with diffident averted gestures, Mr. Updegraff seemed to me rather afraid to speak of his plans. He travels the road Mr. Dreiser travelled and knows how lacking in sympathy critics may be, knows how long Mr. Dreiser was in finding himself and his audience. He cannot be hurried—when the time comes, he will sit down and write his book, five or six words a day, but to a critic he will not disclose so much as its name. He is wise.

CHAPTER XV

REX ELLINGWOOD BEACH

A huge creature, hunting bear on Kodiak Island, wrestling viciously through tense, interminable hours with his brother-in-law, Fred Stone—bravest, most agile, most quaint of mimics—buffeting *The Winds of Chance,* Mr. Rex Beach did not set out in life to become a writer of such fiction as is consumed (in Menckenian phrase) hurriedly, in mammoth gulps, by "fat women and flappers." He meant to study law, but (as he very sagely observes) he "had no money—had to find a place to eat"; and . . .

He had been born in Atwood, Michigan, on September 1, 1877. At eighteen, searching fortune, he went up to the city of Chicago, filled with a consuming energy, a giant for strength. In those days the athletic associations of the larger cities maintained football teams for the entertainment of the multitude. Young Beach had seen just one game of football, when he presented himself; but his physical prowess being so apparent, he was engaged without hesitation as tackle. The college teams used to play an annual series with these association professionals—but later gave it up because the "truck-horse professionals" (as I have seen them called) could not be hurt by anything short of an ax, while the college players (as Mr. Beach has

said) were liable to "tear under the wing." Mr. Beach, however, played through the season, taking part in the games which won for his team the championship of America. Then, with that insatiable appetite for food, as ever anxious for the conquest of new worlds, he transferred to the swimming team—and broke an indoor record at water polo.

All this was in 1897, the time of the Klondyke gold rush. Mr. Beach joined the hunt, stampeded to the Northland, made famous by himself, by Mr. Service, by the late Jack London, and by the unbelievable risks and rewards of Alaskan life. It was the spirit of adventure, the bubble of youth bobbing on the waters of life, that returned bread and gold to the stay-at-home in exchange for a prospector's stake. The story as concerns Mr. Beach has been told in the *Mentor*:—

"With two partners from Chicago, Beach was dumped off the boat at Rampart, on the Yukon, one rainy night. The three hadn't a dollar amongst them, but they had plenty of goods. Then things began to happen. 'We prepared to become exorbitantly rich,' in the words of Beach, 'but it was a bad winter. There were fifteen hundred roughnecks in town, very little food, plenty of scurvy. I soon found that my strength was in my legs. I could stampede with anybody. So I stampeded faithfully whenever I heard of a gold strike, all through that winter.' He became dissatisfied with his two Chicago partners, because they preferred to sit around the cabin cooking tasty messes to tearing through blizzards at the tail of a dog team. They wanted to wait for their million dollars until

spring, but Beach wanted his by Christmas at the latest. And so he set off, and quickly fell under the spell of the Yukon. The glare of the white Arctic night, the toil of the long trail, the complicated struggle for existence, the reversion to primitive passions inevitable in a new civilization in process of formation, made an imperative call to him, and held him fascinated. The life about him moved him to write, and before long he was embarked upon a literary career."

Pardners, his first story, was published in 1905, to be followed by the novel which gave him an instant reputation, *The Spoilers.* Then, in 1907, *The Barrier,* and in 1909, *The Silver Horde*—all dealing, as might be expected, with Alaskan life and written primarily for the yarn they spin. They have had their day, but in their day they served well, moving thousands to wonder, to consider and debate the life of pioneers, to realize in some sort the extent of territory governed from Washington.

Then Mr. Beach turned south and wrote *The Ne'er Do Well* with Panama and the great canal as background, and *The Net* of New Orleans in Mafia days. *The Auction Block* (since become a movie) pictures for the guileless the sale of young girls into marriage, a favorite New York amusement back in 1914, but, doubtless, on protest, now discontinued. *The Iron Trail; The Heart of the Sunset; Rainbow's End; The Crimson Gardenia; The Winds of Chance; Too Fat to Fight*—Mr. Beach, now free of his bondage to the North, the spell of the Yukon broken, travels at ease about the world, writes plays when the mood is on

him with the late Paul Armstrong or with Mr. James McArthur, contributes to magazines, and has been for some time past the earnest and hard-working President of the Authors' League of America.

He is, unquestionably, a force in American letters. Too much, I think, is made of the verdict of posterity. Mr. Beach's books may not live forever—I see no reason why they should—but he has humor, the rough humor of Falstaff, though without that valiant's wit, bubbling over in (which is truly Falstaffian) *Too Fat to Fight;* he has undoubted strength and virility, and, not knowing that in America art is a hot-house plant, he has flung wide the windows that, opening to the north, overlook a new world through which he travels a pioneer. Surely one will come after him to make use of his discoveries; for he is himself a romantic figure for all the realism of his novels, typical of the energy and endurance of our generation.

CHAPTER XVI

UPTON SINCLAIR

"It is a fact," says Mr. Upton Sinclair, "that when American novelists are discussed, my name is systematically omitted." It is also a fact (not easily disproved) that his name appears here, with some mention of his works; but then I was never yet systematic —and besides, Mr. Sinclair is taking himself altogether too seriously.

Let me quote *Punch,* that most apropos and amusing of my contemporaries, under date of December 25, 1918: "Mrs. Lambert, of Edmonton, who is in her hundred-and-fourth year, told an Exchange representative that she had never heard of Mr. Lloyd George. This is strange," muses *Punch,* "for we have not detected any conspiracy to keep his name out of the Press."

Perhaps not—so far as concerns Mr. Lloyd George. But has *Punch* ever made mention of Mr. Upton Sinclair? Or heard of him—for it is just barely possible that there be some who have not? Concerning Mr. Sinclair there is a conspiracy—I have his word for it. "It is a fact," says Mr. Sinclair, "that New York City's leading newspaper has a rule that articles about me and articles written by me are not admitted to its columns; I was told this personally by two different edi-

tors to whom such orders were given." (I can sympathize with Mr. Sinclair in his delusion; I firmly believe that there is some such rule applying to me, enforced not only by "New York City's leading newspaper" but by every newspaper in the country; I find scant mention of my doings in the Press, though I am rapidly emerging from the mass as a notorious character.)

But Mr. Sinclair is, of course, a troublesome person, with his strange hallucinations, his sense of duty, his air of injured martyr. He doubtless annoys the average editor; he annoys me at times. Yet there is no denying the power of his pen, pointed as a lance probing for secret ills, sharpened to some purpose with a constant use, guided by a well-nigh fearless hand. Dr. George Brandes once referred to him as a favorite of his, one of three Americans whose novels he has found worth reading—and Dr. Brandes is a critic capable beyond all reasoning belief. Mr. Clement Wood insists that "if the great American novel has been written, it is Mr. Sinclair's *Jungle;* for no greater work of fiction, especially from the social standpoint as opposed to the individual, has yet been produced among us—in his writing and in his living he has earned the right to be classed among the few preeminent American voices speaking for social justice and a better world." Mr. Sinclair has written ably, if with no proper sense of emphasis, concerning certain phases of American life—and he has his readers no less enamoured than those of Mr. Shaw or Mrs. Porter. For my part I read primarily for the fun of reading, and I confess Mr. Sinclair tires me (now and

again) with his raucous bellowing before some ill-ventilated tenement, his easy sardonic smile, his over-played sympathy with the poor. Life is a compromise at best, but Mr. Sinclair will hear of no armistice—we must have war eternally with the forces of privilege, wealth, leisure, until the last worker returns laden with the fruit of his labor from a vineyard that shall be Eden in all but name. I shall be dead long ere the dawning of that promised day, and I am no mono-maniac. Mr. Sinclair interests me, primarily because he knows how to write, not because he writes of an oppressed and heart-sick world.

But he comes of a fighting stock. His immediate ancestors served in the United States navy; their fathers were with the British. The Civil War swept away the family fortunes. Into a somewhat empty home, with no money, of fine Southern traditions, in Baltimore, Mr. Sinclair was born, September 20, 1878. He emerged slowly, rising out of his environment, doing hack-fiction to pay his way through the College of the City of New York, graduating 1897, and post-graduating four years at Columbia. Before he was twenty-one (so he has often said), his work bulked as large as a complete set of *Waverley*. His first novel, *Springtime and Harvest,* appeared when he was twenty-three; *The Journal of Arthur Stirling,* a poetic narrative of the man condemned to death by poverty and a belief in his ideals, two years later. *Prince Hagen,* fairy-tale of the gold-mad world, came the same year, to be later dramatized and included as one of his four *Plays of Protest.* The next year, *Manassas,* one of the best of Mr. Sinclair's books,

though little known—"a Civil War novel," says Mr. Wood, "immeasurably better than the cheap mediocrity of the best of the Winston Churchill war books," though why this sudden fury against the always affable Mr. Churchill I, for one, cannot guess.

In 1906 appeared *The Jungle*. And in 1906 Mr. Sinclair assisted in the government investigation of the Chicago stockyards. Mr. Sinclair had made the packing town his home, "and got at first hand the sordid bloodiness, the sorrowful filth, the torturing toil of the thousands of hopeless serfs rotting to pile up dividends for the meat lords." (I again quote from Mr. Wood, evidently a friendly critic, one to do justice to his author.) But no more remarkable tale of labor's suffering, of the aches of eyes that strain to look from darkness towards the light, of brute submission, inarticulate and patient slow death, was ever written. "The pages reread to-day," says Mr. Wood, "wring the heart." And if you have never read that book you can never know from what it was Chicago rose to boast herself two million strong. "It hit even the bourgeois in their tenderest spot—the stomach; some observer has said that it gave a nation the stomach-ache. . . .

"Book after book followed, each laying open one of the fester spots of moribund capitalistic society. *The Industrial Republic* is a prophetic study of ten years hence. *The Overman* pictures the higher possibilities of the spirit; *The Metropolis* uncovered the decay in the New York smart set; *The Money Changers* attacked the financial over-lordship of the country; and another of the *Plays of Protest, The Machine,* is a withering indictment of the vicious

alliance between politics, finance and commercialized vice; *Samuel the Seeker* is a simple fictional explanation of Socialism; *Love's Pilgrimage,* another of Mr. Sinclair's finer books, a treatment of love and the home relationship, with a caustic understanding; *Sylvia* continued this; and his latest novel, *King Coal,* seeks to do for the despotic feudalism of the Western mining camps what *The Jungle* did for the packing hells."

A formidable and gallant achievement. Forty years old he is, "and I have supported myself since I was fifteen," he will tell you, "always with my pen. Since the age of twenty I have written exclusively in the cause of human welfare, nearly all my writing being part of the class war. I was able to say to a newspaper man the other day that in those years I have never written a line I did not believe. I have written many lines which were below my best from a literary standpoint, for I have been ill part of the time, and poor most of the time; but I have stood by my faith, such as it was and is. I have won much notoriety, and possibly a little fame; also I have made a good deal of money. I made thirty thousand dollars out of one book, and proceeded at once to invest it in a Socialist colony, so organized I had no possibility of making money out of it; it burned down, and I lost nearly everything and started again. The next time I was on my feet, I launched, here in California" (he lives in Pasadena), "a Socialist dramatic enterprise, again without possibility of profit; and when I had got out of debt from that, I went in a third time, trying to get justice, or a tiny modicum of it, for the slaves of the Colorado coal mines. . . . Before my literary

success I lived in New York on four dollars and a half a week, and later I supported a wife and child on thirty a month. Since my success I have taken a living out of my work; but the taking has generally been behind the living—that is to say, I have spent more on causes than I had at the time. I have never owned an automobile—not even a Ford. I once owned a saddle horse, as a matter of health; but at present I ride a bicycle, for which I paid ten dollars second-hand. . . . So here, behold me, a bug impaled on a pin for study; a specimen of the *agitator auriferens,* popularly described as 'parlor Socialist.'"

Mr. Sinclair's latest book just announced is *Jimmie Higgins.* And this spring, true to form, he published *The Profits of Religion,* a cunning juggling of words, a furious assault upon and arraignment of the established churches. Mr. Sinclair feigns to see in the ordinary country parson, in the deacon who on idle afternoons visits among the poor, in the bishop who lends tone to my lady's garden party, depraved and gold-seeking parasites, drones living upon society, leeches fattening upon the people whom they have drugged with superstition. Making money, à la Billy Sunday, seems to Mr. Sinclair the worst of crimes. It is no worse than making money out of books or sausages—religion is as necessary to life as either. By jove, if the pen were mightier than the sword, Mr. Sinclair would have destroyed his generation long ago.

CHAPTER XVII

HENRY BLAKE FULLER

"It was the Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani who halted his traveling-carriage upon the brow of the Ciminian Forest to look down over the wide-spread Campagna di Roma. . . . In the year 1873—No, do not turn away from such an opening; I shall reach our own day within a paragraph or so."

There is twenty-seven years of experience with life and literature separating those two sentences, one beginning Mr. Fuller's first novel, *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani,* and the other his latest, *On the Stairs.* Mr. Fuller's work shows a constant growth, and "within a paragraph or so" . . . he says. I wonder . . . if he ever will . . . if he ever can; we are so far removed from 1873. We grow old apace and have well-nigh forgotten the horseman who, at a gallop, topped the opening page of every romance written during the mock-heroic reign of the good Sir Walter. Stevenson? "Full of strange oaths, jealous in honor, sudden, and quick in quarrel?" His bubble reputation burst in the Canon's mouth when last my Lord Archbishop took to discussing Shaw and Wells. "In this modern industrial civilization of which we are wont to boast, a certain glacier-like process may be observed," says Mr. Winston Churchill—and there you

have the key-note of the "modern" novel, Mr. Churchill's latest, a thing of sound and fury, signifying that . . . Romance is dead? But how really far we have travelled with our aeroplanes and motors since first we came, at a sudden turn of the page, upon that poor gentleman, the Chevalier, in his halted chaise, the hasty promise of Mr. Fuller's second sentence amply attests; we are no longer interested in the memoirs of dead days, the clash of sword on battered shield, the loves of Aucassin—or so our author presumes. And 'tis presumption, for I swear Monsieur France as up-to-the-minute when he tells of Pontius Pilate—*"Jesus?" murmura-t-il! "Jesus, de Nazareth? Je ne me rapelle pas"*—as ever Mr. Samuel Hopkins Adams with his anti-German *Common Cause,* or Mr. Upton Sinclair with *King Coal* and the misery of Colorado miners. If the Kingdom of Heaven be like unto a mustard seed, this little old world is an oyster for the sword of swaggering Ancients—beneath a sea of troubles the food for prince and knave; and though it seem (to the casual eye) constantly moving, changing, yet is it ever the same—beneath the surface the mystery of life. As it was in the beginning, so it will be when journeys end—a lover's meeting . . . with a heigh-ho, the wind and the rain.

But motley is no wear for Mr. Fuller. In *The Chatelaine of La Trinité* he joins his realist romancer, Fin de Siècle, to search for the soul enshrined in a woman's body; in his writing he seeks to express the spirit of life beautifully within the compass of a slowly-to-be-perfected art. "As may be gathered," he writes, in answering my queries, "I am as much

concerned with form and technique as with any of the other elements involved in fiction: all the more so because these two features seem to be increasingly disregarded by the ordinary reader." As a critic I honor him for his concern with the form and technique of a medium too often debased by the careless haste of artisans—"I wrote *Queed* entire, from the first vague gropings for ideas to the consignment of the manuscript to the express office, in a little over four months," boasts Mr. Henry Sydnor Harrison, and four months later . . . ! But as a reader—my dear Mr. Fuller, it is no part of the ordinary reader's business to puzzle out your means to an artistic end. Produce your effects, your Tuscan post-roads, your crowded ball-rooms, your crimson sunsets, the lark that heralds in the dawn; and we will ask no questions. Never mind the Why and Wherefore; we will disregard your spelling, forget your old-world punctuation, renounce a life of critical sagacity, if you but lead us (whither you will) into some momentary fairyland. For there is no such thing as a pure method in the novel; neither realism nor romance, only the artistic blending of the two.

But Mr. Fuller is an experimentalist. "I have been helping my friend, Miss Harriet Monroe, of *Poetry*," he writes, "as one of her advisory committee; and during the earlier days I helped her on proofs and looked after some of the routine of her printing. The atmosphere of 'free verse' prompted me to try some free verse myself, as applied to the short story; hence *Lines Long and Short* (1917). Then the vogue of the long and amorphous novel led me to revive my

novel-writing (after a lapse of some years) in a briefer, compacter form; hence *On the Stairs* (1918) —together with my discussions of the matter in *The Dial.*"

"The long and amorphous novel." Is he referring to Dreiser? "Turn to page 703 of *The Genius,*" says Mr. Mencken. "By the time one gets there, one has hewn and hacked one's way through 702 large pages of fine print—97 long chapters, more than 250,000 words. And yet, at this hurried and impatient point, with the *coda* already begun, Dreiser halts the whole narrative to explain the origin, nature and inner meaning of Christian Science, and to make us privy to a lot of chatty stuff about Mrs. Althea Jones, a professional healer, and to supply us with detailed plans and specifications of the apartment house in which she lives, works her tawdry miracles, and has her being. . . . A Dreiser novel, at least of the later canon, cannot be read as other novels are read—on a winter evening or summer afternoon, between meal and meal, travelling from New York to Boston. It demands the attention for almost a week, and uses up the faculties for a month." But this is equally true of George Meredith, though his novels are not one half so long; unless you be sane above the ordinary, with great powers of assimilation, it is not advisable to gulp him down at a single sitting. Yet the whole difference is not that Mr. Fuller is an infinitely finer artist than either George Meredith or Dreiser or Tolstoy (for that matter), but that he writes, in Chicago, for a hurried and impatient people, whereas Meredith, Dreiser, Tolstoy wrote for those who have a genuine

curiosity, concerning the human fancy, a seasoned pleasure in books.

Yet for all this absorbing interest in the forms of art, Mr. Fuller takes high rank among the novelists of our day and generation. *With the Procession* and *The Cliff-Dwellers* are still kindly remembered, after twenty-five years, by Mr. Huneker and by Mr. Mencken. In *The Cliff-Dwellers* he first created flesh and blood women, Mrs. Cecilia Ingals and Miss Cornelia McDodd, and they have ably withstood the torment of time. He may, indeed, in some sort, be said to have discovered Chicago in that book—and, in return, Chicago has done much to develop his talent.

He was born in Chicago, January 9th, 1857. His family had been established in the city for two generations before him—his grandfather, Henry Fuller, being one of the pioneers that gathered around Fort Dearborn. His remote ancestors were English on both sides; his father's family reaching New England soon after the *Mayflower,* and his mother's immediately after the War of 1812. He started life intending to become a composer, but, above all, with the determination of supporting himself, although his father and his grandfather were merchants of the highest social and commercial standing, their fortunes growing as the city grew. Yet he served as a bookkeeper, fostering his love of music and saving enough money for a two years' visit to Italy. There was born the idea of *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani,* to be written at odd moments here and there, and stuffed away in a trunk, a jumble of rough notes, to be rescued and to make a dreary round of the publishers, a

vain and dismal business, and finally to be brought out at his own cost by the author. It won immediate and high praise from the discerning; it has an enduring place in old affections—and they are loyal. The dilettante Chevalier, with his doubtful Madonna, his unhappily genuine Contessa, lodging above the Arno—in a fit of despondency he was forced to write himself down a failure, yet is he delightful, sufficient unto his hour.

"I was in Europe in 1879-80," writes Mr. Fuller, "in '83, '92, '94 and '97. These trips supplemented some schooling in Chicago and in a Wisconsin academy. During these later years I have had to keep in America and almost altogether in Chicago, where practical concerns have often been unfavorable to literary production. This circumscribed *locus*—together with the changes naturally brought by time itself—will account, I suppose, for certain alterations in field and in themes." Perhaps . . . yet "Fuller's disappearance is one of the strangest phenomena of American letters," says Mr. Mencken. "I was astonished some time ago to discover that he was still alive. Back in 1899 he was already so far forgotten that William Archer mistook his name, calling him Henry Y. Puller. *Vide* Archer's pamphlet, *The American Language:* New York, 1899."

CHAPTER XVIII

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

"I cannot imagine a more ghastly task than that which confronts you," said Mr. Cabell in the long ago when I was brave: "I await the outcome with no less sympathy than interest."

I thought to deal critically with the hosts of men who make our novels, to tell of their lives, their way of work and play. I learned, to what may prove my undoing, that it is impossible for one man to read their novels, let alone retain reason enough to write of them. For if you delight in *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* (an intriguing title), you cannot possibly away with more than a little of Mr. Winston Churchill and the fury of Mr. Samuel Hopkins Adams, belaboring the press, will be a sound signifying almost nothing to you. For if you delight in *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* —'tis almost a confession of faith.

The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck tells of Colonel Rudolph Musgrave and of the girl, Patricia Vartrey (a second cousin once removed), who came visiting in his house at Lichfield in Virginia. She was engaged to an earl, and yet. . . . For at least a decade the Colonel had been invaluable to Lichfield matrons alike against the entertainment of an "out-of-town girl," the management of a cotillion and the preven-

tion of unpleasant pauses among incongruous dinner guests. He was by all accounts the social triumph of his generation. Perhaps he entertained her. They seem to have fallen in love. "At worst," he had been reflecting before she came, "at worst I can make love to her. They, as a rule, take kindly to that; and in the exercise of hospitality a host must go to all lengths to divert his guests. Failure is not permitted." . . . And then she came. She came to him across the trim, cool lawn, leisurely, yet with a resilient tread that attested the vigor of her slim young body. She was all in white. . . . "Failure is not permitted," he was repeating to himself. . . . "You're Cousin Rudolph?" she asked. "How perfectly entrancing! You see until to-day I always thought that if I had been offered the choice between having cousins or appendicitis I would have preferred to be operated on." . . . And Colonel Musgrave noted that her hair was really like the reflection of a sunset in rippling waters, and that her mouth was an inconsiderable trifle, a scrap of sanguine curves, and that her eyes were purple glimpses of infinity. They fell in love, and what became of the earl is not at all another story but concerns them intimately, for they married. And they were, to all outward seeming, quite happy. It is of their happiness that Mr. Cabell tells—and of the serpents in Eden. Also something of the Colonel's past, and of Mr. Charteris, a novelist and part author with Mr. Cabell of *Beyond Life*, and of Anne Charteris, his wife, and of the Colonel's son who was also Patricia's son—and of the death of Charteris who had

thought to be lover to Patricia, and of the death of Patricia, and of the death of Colonel Musgrave.

"I question whether wickedness is possible to humanity outside of literature," says John Charteris in *Beyond Life*. "In books, of course, may be encountered any number of competently evil people who take a proper pride in their depravity. But in life men go wrong without dignity and sin, as it were, from hand to mouth." Charteris himself sins without shame and with something of that gaiety which makes of Bottom, though he roar, a lover on whom fairies are swift to wait. "Let us forget the crudities of life," he pleads, "and say foolish things to each other. For I am pastorally inclined, Patricia; I wish to lie at your feet and pipe amorous ditties upon an oaten reed. Have you no such article about you, Patricia?" He draws a key-ring from his pocket, and, like the fool in the forest, looks upon it with lack-lustre eye. "Or would you prefer that I whistle into the opening of this door-key, to the effect that we must gather our rose-buds while we may, for Time is still a-flying, fa-la, and that a drear old age, not to mention our spouses, will soon descend upon us, fa-la-di-leero?" But she protests, with an indulgent smile: "Don't be foolish, *mon ami!* I am unhappy."

As indeed she is. We are all of us unhappy when we love, unhappy while we live—though we may exist, contented, without unhappiness. And Charteris, though he laughs, is disappointed with the scheme of things, with the folly of fact, the achievements of romance. Mr. Cabell himself sees no way out, bids

us live (if we can) in dreams, forgetting reality; and in *The Cream of the Jest*. . . .

The Cream of the Jest concerns one Felix Kennaston, a Virginia gentleman of means and imagination, who, while walking in his garden at twilight, plotting the final chapters of a novel that should commemorate the high-hearted story of Guiron and Etarre, stooped to pick up a shining bit of metal that lay beside the pathway, conscious of a vague notion that he had just dropped that bit of metal. Later he was destined to puzzle over his inability to recollect what motive had prompted him to slip this glittering trifle into his pocket. Later, by long gazing at it, he was able to hypnotize himself and so put off the gross life of the flesh, becoming, almost at will, the creature of his fancies. But that night he dined alone with his wife, sharing a taciturn meal. He and Kathleen talked of very little, now, save the existent day's small happenings, of seeing So-and-so, and of So-and-so's having said this or that. But soon he was contentedly laboring, in the solitude of his library, upon the book he had always intended to write—*The Audit at Storisende,* or, rather, *Men Who Loved Alison,* as before publication the novel came to be called. This book was to be different from any of his previous compositions. This book was different, for, though the tale was set in that happy, harmless Fable-land bounded by Avalon and Phœcia and Sea-coast Bohemia, in the writing it all seemed real to Kennaston—far more real, indeed, than the life his body was aimlessly shuffling through. "Some few there must be in every age and every land," says Mr. Cabell in the Auctorial Induction to *The Cer-*

tain Hour, "of whom life claims nothing very insistently save that they write perfectly of beautiful happenings." Of these few Felix Kennaston is one; and Mr. Cabell—though I speak with no authority, I take it that Mr. Cabell is another.

Mr. Cabell has been writing for the past fifteen years, and yet (as has been, perhaps, too often pointed out) his name is almost unknown to the ordinary pastime seeking reader. He was born in Richmond in Virginia, April 14, 1879, the son of Robert Gamble Cabell and his wife, Anne Branch Cabell. He received his early education in Richmond, and, in 1898, graduated from the College of William and Mary, where he had been for some time an undergraduate instructor in French and Greek. He then worked in the press-room of the Richmond *Times,* and, from 1899 to 1901, on the New York *Herald,* returning to Richmond and the city staff of the Richmond *News* in the latter year. In 1902 he quit the newspaper game, until 1910 writing for various magazines some sixty short stories, together with various translations, verses, essays and historical and genealogical studies. In 1904 the first of his novels, *The Eagle's Shadow,* was published. He has spent some time traveling in France, America, Ireland and England; he has published three volumes of Virginia genealogy; he has been historian of the Virginia Society of Colonial Wars and of the Virginia Society of the Sons of American Revolution. From 1911-13 he was coal mining in West Virginia. Since his marriage in 1913, he has lived (for the most part) at Dumbarton Grange, Dumbarton, Virginia. There, though a figure of some importance in the social and

intellectual life of the community, he spends his days in writing, his evenings reading.

"My books must stand for my biography," he says. "My personality is, even to me, entirely devoid of interest. My life has been uneventful and, to the bystander, colorless. My philosophy, such as it is, I have endeavored to voice in my books. For the rest, I would say that in *Beyond Life* you will find opinions upon pretty much any topic. I warn you, though, that I decline to endorse the views of Mr. Charteris. Such as they are, I present them; that is all."

Eight of Mr. Cabell's twelve published books are fiction. They are:

The Certain Hour, The Soul of Melicent, The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck, Chivalry, The Cords of Vanity, Gallantry, The Line of Love, The Eagle's Shadow.

Jurgen, his latest work of fiction, has been written and is announced for early publication.

CHAPTER XIX

ROBERT WILLIAM CHAMBERS

Of Robert W. Chambers I read: "What impresses one most about Mr. Robert W. Chambers is his amazing versatility. In addition to being a popular novelist, he is an expert on rare rugs, an artist, and so well qualified a judge of fine art that he can talk intelligently to the curators and directors of museums about the old masters on exhibition there; equipped with an understanding of Chinese and Japanese antiques so that he can detect forgeries in that art; an authority on armour; a lover of outdoors, of horses, dogs, and an ardent collector of butterflies; and, in addition, a thorough man of the world, who knows Paris and Petrograd, and many of the out-of-the-way corners of the earth. These are the qualities that come to mind readily, but the list is far from complete. The longer one knows Mr. Chambers, the more varied the knowledge he finds in him."

Now let me quote from Mr. Joseph Pennell's *Life of James McNeill Whistler:*

"When Whistler came to England, art was the Academy, an Academy that had strangled the traditions of art and set up sentiment and anecdote. Wilkie explained the ideal of the nineteenth-century Academician when he said that 'to know the taste of

the public—to learn what will best please the employer—is, to an artist, the most valuable of all knowledge.' . . . Every taste was catered to. Everybody would understand, and art had never been so popular in England. The Academy became a social power. As art was the last thing looked for on the walls, so the artist was the last thing looked for in the Academician. The situation was summed up in Whistler's reply to a group of ladies who were praising Lord Leighton (President of the Royal Academy): 'He is such a wonderful musician! such a gallant colonel! such a brilliant orator! such a dignified President! such a charming host! such an amazing linguist!' they chorused. 'H'm, paints, too, don't he?' asked Whistler."

American letters are in much the same condition as was art in England when Whistler arrived. But you must understand that versatility, though praised of ladies and seemingly amazing, is not of prime importance. Burns was a plough-boy who tried in vain to read Shakespeare, a farm-hand for whom the culture of France was the culture of vineyards, a peasant piping a simple melody upon a oaten reed. Lord Leighton was an orator, a musician, a linguist—and a failure, for he failed in that which he undertook—he could not paint; and so no longer interests us—for who to-day cares to hear of his oration, his music?

And so with Mr. Chambers, when judged as artist or authority on art, he is amazingly versatile and writes too.

But let not the hasty rush to false conclusions. Lord Leighton was a man of the world, a social

triumph, one whose life was easy—why should he paint? It was necessary that Burns write beautifully, if he would win to our good graces, atone for manifold sins, be received in Edinburgh drawing-rooms. It was not necessary that Lord Leighton do anything save make himself agreeable.

Mr. Chambers is not ambitious to wrest fame from the future. He laughs well, knows how to jest at table, is a very agreeable companion, the dinner guest par excellence, as witty, as charming, as piquant as any in Paris or London or up and down Fifth Avenue. And Mr. Edward Byerstedt insists, with reason, that his early books are in careless moments worth reading: *In the Quarter, The King in Yellow, The Maker of Moons, The Streets of Ascalon, Iole, The Gay Rebellion.* I personally know of no better way to entertain a tiresome guest through a rainy afternoon—a guest who knows nothing of art or books or Petrograd—for Mr. Chambers plays a fair second to Münchausen; by much travel he has learned to exaggerate the things that he has seen, he has gained a clever sort of polish.

Mr. Chambers was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., May 26, 1865. In his youth he aspired to be a painter. He studied art in Paris at Julien's studio from 1886 to 1893, first exhibiting at the Salon in 1889. Then he returned to New York and for a while contributed illustrations to *Life, Truth, Vogue,* etc. In 1893 his first novel, *In the Quarter,* appeared. In the same year—he averages about two novels a year—he published the uncanny but fascinating *King in Yellow,* a collection of stories of artist life. In 1895 he pub-

lished what is still a rollicking book of verse, *With the Band:*

Ses Corporal Madden to Private McFadden:
"Bedad yer a bad 'un!
Now turn out yer toes!
Yer belt is unhookit,
Yer cap is on crookit,
Ye may not be drunk,
But, be jabers, ye look it!
Wan—two!
Wan—two!
Ye monkey-faced divil, I'll jolly ye through!
Wan—two!—
Time! Mark!
Ye march like the aigle in Cintheral Park!"

Then, at irregular intervals from 1894 to 1903, came *The Red Republic, Lorraine, Ashes of Empire, Maids of Paradise,* all having dashing young Americans as their heroes, all with a setting in France during the Franco-Prussian War. Then with *Cardigan* and *The Maid at Arms,* he turned to the American Revolution.

But the setting—New York, Palm Beach, the fields of France—the time—yesterday, to-day, to-morrow—are as nothing to *The Girl Phillipa, Athalie, Some Ladies in Haste, The Restless Sex.* And the problems of marriage, and of heredity—the foibles, fashions, follies, the extravagances and eccentricities of the Upper Classes; these he details with a quite uncommon ingenuity that the shop-girl may read, envy

a little and turn away—a fox for cuteness—recognizing that the existence of débutantes is flat and unprofitable, the grapes from which they brew the wine of life as sour as gall. For Mr. Chambers is something of a philosopher. He realizes that if he depicted the Four Hundred as worthy of all praise, their doings making progress for all time, he would not be believed, and he would lose his readers.

THE WORKS OF ROBERT CHAMBERS INCLUDE:

In the Quarter, The King in Yellow, The Red Republic, A King and a Few Dukes, The Maker of Moons, With the Band, The Mystery of Choice, Lorraine, Ashes of Empire, The Haunts of Men, The Cambric Mask, Outsiders, The Conspirators, Cardigan, The Maids of Paradise, Orchard-Land, Japonette, Forest Land, Iole, The Fighting Chance, Mountain Land, Tracer of Lost Persons, The Tree of Heaven, The Firing Line, Some Ladies in Haste, the Danger Mark, The Special Messenger, Hide and Seek in Forestland, The Green Mouse, Ailsa Page, Streets of Ascalon, Adventures of a Modest Man, Blue-bird Weather, Business of Man, The Common Law, Gay Rebellion, Who Goes There?, The Hidden Children Athalie, Police!, The Dark Star, The Better Man, The Girl Philippa, Barbarian, The Restless Sex, The Moonlit Way, In Secret.

CHAPTER XX

EDWARD LUCAS WHITE

Mr. Edward Lucas White is the author of but two novels, *El Supremo,* 1916, and *The Unwilling Vestal,* 1918; yet is he one of the foremost, one of the most important, one of the most interesting of our innumerable novelists. And to understand him properly. . . .

"A literarian can be understood," says Mr. White, "only through a knowledge of his origin; of the circumstances, influences and training which shaped his character; of the enthusiasms which inspire and the theories which control his writings; and of his methods and aims.

"I am a genuine American, since, before the Declaration of Independence, all my ancestors except one were in the thirteen colonies, and he, Major Florant Meline, came over with Lafayette, fought through the Revolutionary War, married here and settled in Albany. I am also a genuine Marylander and Baltimorean. My great-grandfather, John White (1779-1854), was a local merchant of some prominence and prospered sufficiently to retire and live on his investments. Another Baltimore great-grandfather, Fielding Lucas, Jr. (1781-1854), was in his time one of the most prominent publishers in the United States. I was born in Bergen, New Jersey, on May 18th, 1866, my father

being in business in New York for some years before and after his marriage. My earliest recollections are of Brooklyn, where my parents lived from 1868 to 1872. Later I spent some years with my grandmother on her farm on the eastern shore of Lake Seneca, in Ovid Township, Seneca County, N. Y. In 1877 my parents returned to Baltimore and I have been ever since a Baltimorean. I have spent little time outside of Maryland. In 1885 I went by sailing ship to Rio de Janeiro, spent the summer of 1889 touring in Europe and for the first half of 1892 was a temporary, stop-gap teacher of freshman Latin at Dartmouth College.

"In my teens, besides history, poetry and fiction, my favorite reading was about science: astronomy, geology, biology, palæontology and primitive man: Darwin, Huxley and Kingdon Clifford and such writers. I expected to be a biologist and public lecturer. At college I quickly realized that my interest in science was all in its results and that I had no special faculties for inference and almost none of observation.

"While at sea, in the company of the firmament and the ocean and their surges and stars, fifty-four days out to Rio and thirty-five back, I had the leisure to evaluate my character. I discerned that I was most positively a poet and planned my life accordingly. I had to make a living and considered my ambitions, tastes and powers. Longfellow appeared the best model. It seemed to me that, as long as I lived, there would be a good demand for professors of Romance Languages in American Colleges and Universities; that mastering the Romance languages would conduce

to development as a literarian, and that teaching them would not be destructive of creative literary powers. I continued my studies with all that in view. After making myself familiar with Old High-German, Middle High-German, Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, Old French, Old Spanish, Early Italian and what was best in their literatures and in the more modern literatures of those tongues, I realized with a shock that everything admirable in those literatures is either a reminiscence, an echo or an imitation of something in the literatures of Rome and Greece: that an aspirant for success in creative literary effort should go straight to the sources; that no one ever really comprehends modern literatures without knowing the classics; that no one can be a capable teacher of modern language linguistics without the linguistics of Latin and Greek. I went back to the classical tongues and literatures, to put in a foundation on which I could hope to be a really good professor of Romance languages and literatures and might become a real poet. Before I had completed that foundation, before the superstructure was more than begun, my health broke down. I could study no more and must make a living at once. I was master of merely mediocre attainments in Latin and Greek. School teaching in these was my only resource. A teacher of Greek and Latin in private schools in Baltimore I have been ever since 1892.

"As with my education, so with my literary output: the course of my life has been determined by my bad health. Since nine years of age I have been subject to sudden and unpredictable sick-headaches, which lay me up, abed and fasting in the dark, for from one to

three days and after which I dare not look at print or writing more than momentarily for days or maybe weeks. Even when at my best I must be wary and cautious in the use of my eyes; reading or writing too continuously or too long always brings on a visitation. Thus I have been able to do only a small fraction of what I might. I can never work by artificial light, seldom by the waning light of late afternoon, mostly only in the morning.

"My tastes in literature were early dominated by my passion for the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. I fuddled my brain reading and rereading him till I had to banish from my home everything of his, if I was to read anything else. Later Swinburne led me not only to intensive study of prosody, but to the knowledge of some of the authors I love best: Sappho, Catullus, Dante, Victor Hugo, Villon, Baudelaire, Rossetti, and others.

"Besides my dominating interest in literature I have always had others. In Europe I managed to see some hundreds of thousands of paintings in three months and have ever since possessed vague approximations to connoisseurship in paintings. I take a similar interest in sculpture and architecture. I read much about international politics, geography and the inhabitants, products and manufactures of all parts of the world. My chief pleasures are writing and reading. All other occupations are merely interruptions to or postponements of these.

"I early recognized that anything I wrote in verse assumed at once a final form and had a sort of merit: the rhythm was never despicable, nor was any violence

done either to the sense or the metre in fitting each to the other. On the other hand I might rewrite an essay or story any number of times and still find it as contemptible as in its first draft. When, after my sea-voyage, I reconsidered my manuscripts, I judged all my prose worthless even as practice-work and my hundreds of attempts at poems no more than passable experiments; I burnt them all. Thereafter I soon acquired the power to write poems by no means beneath notice both in ideas and in expression, but I toiled on doggedly at prose without ever seeming any nearer a prose style. Not until August of 1903 did I write a tale which my critical faculties approved as not bad enough to burn.

"As time went on my bread-winning and other duties used up more nearly all my daily energy and my surplus for creative writing dwindled steadily. I realized that I could seldom attain that detachment, serenity and elevation of mood in which alone poetry can be produced. I was unwilling to waste time on writing such mediocre verse as might be written by a man tired, worried and distracted; I turned more and more to prose, which can be turned out in any mood in any brief interval of leisure. My one volume of poems attracted little notice.

"From 1904 on I had some meagre success both at writing short stories and at selling them to magazines. By 1909 I felt myself capable of a romance. My rash impulse was to emulate Sienkiewicz's *The Deluge,* which I rate as the greatest historical romance ever written; for, when I became fascinated with Francia, the Dictator of Paraguay, and read up on him, I real-

ized that I had blundered on an unworked Golconda of literary material. I attacked my task with ardor, elated at my great opportunity and wrote my *El Supremo* in the summers of 1910, 1911 and 1912, with some little work in the winters between. I write my tales in a large free hand in lead-pencil on small sheets of paper. My wife typewrites them from my cruelly illegible draft. The chief event in my life has been a singularly happy marriage.

"Having meditated for years a picaresque adventure-romance of the days of Commodus I was saturated with the spiritual and social atmosphere of that period, and, when, after the completion of *El Supremo*, I considered which of the plots in my note-books seemed most tempting, I pitched on that of *The Unwilling Vestal* as being of that same period. I had long had an ambition to write a romance of classic times in which the characters would be depicted as talking as the Romans talked, rather than according to the absurd conventions of English literary tradition for classic conversations. The result, while satisfactory to me, has not won the critics or the public.

"In all I have written I have always asked myself how the poem or tale would read a hundred years from now. If, on examination, it seemed of merely ephemeral interest, I have almost always destroyed what I had written.

"My literary creed is that no one should write unless in possession of an idea of theme or plot original and worth writing about; nor unless writing lucidly and agreeably."

MR. WHITE'S WORKS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:
Narrative Lyrics (1908), *El Supremo* (1916), *The Unwilling Vestal* (1918), *The Song of the Sirens* (short stories, 1919).

CHAPTER XXI

NEWTON A. FUESSLE

To those who read *The Harbor* in the spring of 1915—*The Harbor* with its quiet strength, the echo and the reality of life—Mr. Ernest Poole must have seemed a literary catch of the finest. To most of his readers he was unknown, though he had been writing (for the magazines and for the stage) through a number of years. But to read: "Chapter I.—'You chump,' I thought contemptuously. I was seven years old at the time, and the gentleman to whom I referred was Henry Ward Beecher . . ." must excite curiosity. Or to hear him say: "Sue made me perfectly wretched . . ." To look back with him and smile at his "small desolate self" as he was in the months that followed, after Dillon had sailed away with Eleanore to Europe. To find a way out of the chaos and confusion along the Hudson, about the East River, among the railroad lines; to shift and reload the endless traffic onto ocean-going vessels; to see the Harbor grow into a port, the boy into a man—one inclines to expect a great deal of Mr. Ernest Poole in the years to come.

For there is a fascination in such novels, the novels that discover new and competent writers. One feels, in lesser degree, what Keats felt when first he looked

into Chapman's Homer—"like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken."

And so when I heard of *The Flail* (published as my book goes to press), I prevailed upon one who writes, as in some old anthology, under that most authentic of pseudonyms, Anonymous, to tell me of Mr. Newton A. Fuessle. . . .

"A few cogent literary can'ts have spread Newton A. Fuessle out into a dual personality. He can't write fiction when he's hungry. He can't write fiction when he's cold. He can't write fiction in the daytime. He can't write fiction when he's worried about bills. He can't write fiction unless he is surrounded by creature comforts. He can't write fiction without good cigars and plenty of them.

"He, therefore, spends most of his time making it possible to spend part of his time in sincere, unhampered literary production. His office is on Wall Street. But instead of finding that a cold, calculating business career is smothering the artist in him, it has on the contrary helped cultivate the artist in him. At dusk, his creative faculties swing automatically into action.

"He believes that the present enormous quantity production of fiction is a curse, and is satisfied if he can spend several hours a day on a novel under working conditions that suit him. He believes that extravagant tastes are inherent in every imaginative writer, and that tossing off rapid-fire tales under high pressure to get the money is all too likely to follow if a fiction writer's income depends entirely upon his royalties. He has seen too many writers of promise cave in under

the strain and descend from their best to their worst, to be willing to 'step lively' on the same treadmill.

"Mr. Fuessle's creed contains some beguiling and unexpected ideas on the responsibility of novelists. He declares that the markets are overwhelmed with jaded, strained, unimportant new books by established novelists who dash them off because they want a new car, a new house, or a new wife. He hates writing which has become a habit, and which rushes into print whether or not the novelist has something new to say, something important to set forth, something to picture sincerely. He blames modern merchandizing and advertising for the enormous markets they have created for shallow and mediocre fiction by flooding the country with magazines that have largely become primarily portfolios of advertising.

"Mr. Fuessle's own apprenticeship in letters was served at what he calls the altar of the false gods of fast and furious writing for the notion-counters of magazine fiction, where the whole cry is for novelty instead of truth. He must have written and sold nearly a million words of short stories before it began to dawn upon him that nearly every master he had studied had to tear himself loose from the short story before he found the way to something more than fragmentary expression of what he knew about life.

" 'The short story has gained its popularity in America,' declares Mr. Fuessle, 'because of the ease with which the lazy, the superficial, the dilettante-minded can dabble with it and market their manuscripts. The short story is the china-painting of fiction. Even in its more finished development, it usually remains the

mere trapeze-work, the acrobatics of fiction, neurotic instead of natural, smart instead of true. Even Guy de Maupassant attained greatness in but a few short stories in all his voluminous production in this form. We can search almost in vain for the real de Maupassant, the real Tolstoy, the real Balzac in their short stories. One must go to their novels to get at their understanding of life. The short story puts the premium on the arrangement, the distortion, the playing with the facts of life. The novel, on the contrary, puts the premium where it belongs—upon a revelation of the deeper currents of motive and experience. By the novel, I mean, of course, the record of the evolution of character.

"'It is far from my intention to condemn the short story in its entirety, or to argue that it does not have its legitimate field,' continued the author. 'As an apprenticeship to more comprehensive endeavor in writing, as an interlude between more sustained efforts, the short story has an important place. But it seems too bad that so abrupt, breathless, fragmentary, and restricted a form of fiction has attained such overwhelming popularity in America, and offers such large rewards and the lure of so quick a "turn-over," that its whole tendency is to withold a writer's efforts from the longer-lived and more satisfying novel form.

"'It is one of the tragedies of American literature that such writers as Edgar Allan Poe, O. Henry, and Harris Merton Lyon died without leaving us a novel. One hopes that gifted contemporaries like Edna Ferber and Fannie Hurst will not lay down their pens before they have bequeathed to the world their share of

novels, and revealed to us more fully than they can do in the terse confines of short stories, their singular comprehension of life.

" 'When I speak of the responsibility of the novelist, I mean it in an artistic, rather than in a moral sense. The reader can get no more out of a novel than the author puts into it. So much sham and pose and pretense have taken possession of the people who write and publish books that one sometimes feels like running screaming out of a bookshop.

" 'My conception of what should go into a novel in order to make it worthy of being sold and read, is stated from the point of view of one who has bought and examined and thrown away large quantities of books for the sake of finding the few that I wanted to keep. I believe that a novelist who is unwilling to express as truly as possible his own reactions to his contact with life, has no business wasting your time and my time with his fiction. Unless he possesses the candor and the willingness to do that, he is adding nothing new to the net recorded sum of human knowledge. I do not say that a novelist should write his autobiography into his novel. Lord forbid! But I do imply that unless I can see an important phase of myself in each of the characters I undertake to present, and interpret my characters in terms of my own reactions to life, I cannot imbue a character with anything approaching convincing verisimilitude,' concluded Mr. Fuessle."

. . . . . .

And so concludes my interviewer. And I return to the slaughter, not exactly as a lamb, but rather

(despite Mr. Fuessle's protested innocence) as one of Herod's henchmen. For I do not believe it necessary that a writer add "anything new to the net recorded sum of human knowledge"; I doubt very much if there be anything new to add—certainly you will not find it in Mr. Cabell's *Beyond Life,* to my notion the most profitable and thought-provoking of recent fictions, for it was Wilde's theory that nature imitated art, Wilde's theory taken from Whistler, who found its proof in Japanese experience. Nor am I convinced that Shakespeare reacted to life in terms of Falstaff. Rather was Falstaff deliberate creation, born in disillusion, an escape from the cramped reality of Elizabethan life—for art is that earth recreated nearer the heart's desire of which old Omar dreamed. Not because he was a student of the things that are did Shakespeare make of Malvolio a steward in the house of the Lady Olivia and set that house upon the shores of Seacoast Bohemia. Love, not reason, is the sole motivating force in art—all great thoughts, as Viscount Morley has said, spring from the heart.

Yet is all this little better than a quibble, for, in the main, I agree with Mr. Fuessle; and I like his book immensely. It is the story of Rudolph Dohmer, youngest son of a German immigrant father, who, growing up in the eighteen-nineties, early feels the promptings of a desire to become thoroughly American, who fights against the "hunnishness" that is in him through the nineteen-hundreds, through school, through the University of Chicago, through business and marriage, to a victory in nineteen-eighteen. It is told with a wealth of explaining incident, in beauty

and understanding, with a vividness that is rare even in the best of poetry. But it overstresses—written during the war—the horror of being born German. There is surely nothing disgraceful in being born a Nietzsche, a Goethe, a Strauss, a Richtofen, a Weddigen—Lord, that we had them by the million. The point at issue is, in a phrase, not well taken—for young Byron with his club-foot endured just such a youth as Mr. Fuessle describes, and it is (for all our democracy) the experience of countless Jews. One instance:—

" 'Who was that you were talking to, dear?' asked the girl's mother.

" 'Oh, no one much,' answered Emily. 'That German boy who goes to school.'

"The listener retreated heavily to his bicycle, and rode away in utter anguish into the melancholy September night. . . . The phrase 'that German boy' glided to and fro like a shadowy shuttle through the loom of his being, weaving arabesques of despair and distorting his self-respect into gloomy self-pity. . . ."

As when Byron, at Eton, overheard one whom he loved refer to him as "that lame kid." There is in all of us something of that self-conscious shame which makes young Dohmer doubt his worth, an uncouth viciousness against which we must fight, inherited brutalities and sin. Mr. Fuessle's hero might as well have been Irish or Scotch or Italian—and if it is true that they suffer at our hands as he says young Dohmer suffered, then the shame is ours, not theirs. . . .

Yet is the meaning always clear, the expression suited to the mood . . . "a feeling of inferiority had

run like a sombre fugue through all his school days. . . ." Though the metaphors are at times over-emphasized: "billows of heat brooded over Becker Street like almost visible dragons . . . the red, surly sun had banked his fires for the night . . . the red-brick houses glared at each other across the pavement . . . the sultry, humid afternoon had been as moist as a sponge . . ." since a sponge, out of water, may become as dry as the deserts of Arabia. For Mr. Fuessle is fond of the double adjective: "a brown-haired, dimpled young woman . . . querulous, dyspeptic father . . . hot, panting crowds, heavy, squeaking Sabbath shoes . . . she had a ringing laugh that issued musically from a long, contralto throat through strong, gleaming teeth and full, crimson lips. . . ." But he knows how to write. . . .

"He turned to his favorite selection, a passage from Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*. Pensively he scanned the lines. They were saturated with color and pathos and longing. They filled him as music fills a void of the spirit. . . . The more he mused over the passage, the more beauty he found dwelling in the lines—the gentle melancholy of the rhythmic lines. . . .

"They were playing a Viennese Waltz. The strains were wholly strange to Rudolph, but their luminous coloring, their fleet measure and whimsical phrasing attracted him mightily—stole through his being like rich, narcotic vapors. . . .

". . . a deliciously disturbing glimpse of the dusk of rose and twilight of green, shed from certain hotel casements. . . .

"Rudolph adored her. But his romantic yearnings

sought no more definite expression than mute worship from afar. He contented himself with feasting his sad, hungry eyes upon her face, with waiting for the deluge of an occasional smile. . . ."

CHAPTER XXII

EMERSON HOUGH

"For fifteen years," says Mr. Hough, "I was engaged in professional out-of-doors journalism. I have been a sportsman all my life, and my father before me. In this capacity I have traveled in almost every state in the union, in New Brunswick, Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territory, Alaska, many parts of the Northern Rockies, many parts of the Sierras and American Rockies. I must confess to rather a vagabond life. Sometimes I wonder if I ever slept under one roof thirty nights consecutively. At least my frequent trips into the open have done me a great deal of good physically, and have afforded me pretty much all the happier moments of my life—it is impossible to fret over things when you are wading a trout stream, following a good dog, or riding a good horse.

"I still have my old cow saddle, I suppose a dozen rifles or so, half a dozen shotguns, as many fly rods, salmon rods, etc. I do not know whether I would rather fish for salmon, bass or trout, but have pretty much gone out of all bait fishing in preference for the fly.

"I have killed, if I make the count fairly, or helped to kill, either fourteen or fifteen bears, nine of them

grizzlies. I may have the count wrong by one. I am rather fond of grizzly hunting, but must confess I never had any kind of an adventure with a bear. I would rather shoot 'Bob White' quails than grizzlies and believe them about as dangerous.

"As to my favorite sports, I cannot name them. Sometimes I think it is shooting quail over a good dog, and again I think nothing touches stream fishing for trout, where you wade and cast a good fly with a good rod. I put in time regularly each Spring and Fall in this pastime—going to Michigan, Wisconsin, the Rockies for the one sport, and to some of the Southern States for the other.

"I have killed examples of most of the big game in the country—of every species, including my buffalo, which I killed as late as 1886. I have seen some rather wild trips in the wilderness, of course, but do not know whether I have ever been much of a hero, although I have had many a bully time. I think I have between a dozen and a dozen and a half mounted heads of big game, product of my own rifle—the taxidermist has most of them now, for the Missus kicks on them littering the house. My workroom is the abhorrence of the aforesaid Missus, because mixed up with the appliances of a modern business office I have all sorts of Indian junk and curios of the out-of-doors, literally from one end of this continent to the other.

"I presume that, after all, although I am better known as a writer of fiction and magazine articles, my real life work has been in the open and has to do with literature of the out-of-doors. I write a great many things for the *Saturday Evening Post,* for an instance,

but I believe I enjoy my little department there more than anything else I do for that great institution.

"My first book, *The Singing Mouse* stories, had to do with out-of-doors. My next book—and the one which gave me my first dim chance as a writer—was *The Story of the Cowboy.* My first novel, *Girl at the Halfway House,* dealt somewhat with the out-of-doors and with the West. I have liked the early life of America as a field for study more than anything else I have ever handled. Often as a boy I regretted I was not born in the time of Carson and Frémont. I still regret that. I believe I would have fitted into the life of that time better than I do into that of to-day."

But in spite of Mr. Hough's preferences for his stories of life in the open, it is as a writer of tales that most people know and admire him. *The Mississippi Bubble* and *Fifty-four Forty or Fight* were among the best-sellers of a decade ago. A couple of years ago his story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, *The Magnificent Adventure,* was widely read. The latest of his novels, *The Way Out,* deals with the mountaineers of Kentucky and their struggle for education.

Mr. Hough was born at Newton, Iowa, June 28, 1857, the son of Joseph Rond and Elizabeth Hough, and was educated at the State University of Iowa, graduating A.B. in 1880. "I started in life with a very small equipment," he says in the *American Magazine:* "I had a university education, perfectly good and perfectly worthless. In line with the traditions of my family I was intended for the practice of law, and was admitted to the bar. Perhaps the ambition to write was mine from early youth; I don't know. I

remember that in the course of my law studies I used to snatch time to write 'pieces,' as we called them in those days. Some of those early sketches found print in magazines of the East before the time that I was admitted to the bar.

"After I was admitted to the bar my first location was in a small town in New Mexico, half mining camp and half cow camp, the capital of an inland empire of wild life such as cannot be found anywhere on the surface of the earth to-day. In this rugged field, among these splendid and sterling men, in an atmosphere not too law-abiding, but always just and broad, I got my first actual impression of life on my own. I learned there to respect a man for what he really is, not for what he has or for what he pretends to be."

Mr. Hough stresses the importance of keeping one's independence of thought and action—take less money, if necessary, but be free. And he would offer William Ernest Henley's *Invictis* to "every young man, every beginner, and every striver, of whatever age"; he insists that "it ought to be included in every business college course," that "it shows the only road to success: and, what is much better, it points out what success ought to be at the end of that road":—

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from Pole to Pole;
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.
>
> . . . . .
>
> It matters not how straight the gate,
> How charged with punishment the scroll,

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul!

A fine poem which did not help Henley to succeed, or to keep friends with the great men of his day. This proves, I think, that you can make a legend of yourself in letters. I have a sincere liking for Henley, both for what he was and for what he pretended to be—yet I notice that it is the pretense which most impresses the ordinary—for in literature the dream prevails, the dream of what you might have been.

The latest book by Mr. Hough has been published under the title of *The Web*. It is the story of the American Detective League, that vast silent volunteer army of business men who became detectives to help win the war. It has been called a revelation of patriotism.

His next scheduled book is *The Sagebrusher*.

CHAPTER XXIII

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

Mr. H. L. Mencken insists that the late Confederate States, for all their forty million population can show but one literary craftsman of the first rank, Mr. Cabell. This is, however, not so strange as he would have us think, for weighed in the balance with all the literature of all the world, any age and any country must seem, at the moment considered, almost entirely void and deserted of beauty. There never was, there never will be (as Whistler, in his *Ten O'clock,* told all those that have ears to hear)—there never was an artistic age nor an artistic people. The Athenians who came to finger and carp before the work of Phidias were no more intelligent than the Greek who reads Gyp and affects a Parisian accent. The Roman who read Horace was no more usual in the days of Augustus than is the Englishman who quotes him in the *Times,* paraphrasing his quaintness to prove the paucity of English.

True, Mr. Thomas Nelson Page is not to be compared to Boccaccio. For all of *Santa Claus's Partner* and *John Marvel, Assistant,* we might never know that over three hundred years ago Marlowe set us free "from jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits, and such conceits as clownage keeps in pay"—might never know that men have looked out from prison windows to

glimpse the stars. Mr. Thomas Nelson Page is no Ibsen, is not to be mentioned in the same breath with Synge or Schnitzler or de Maupassant . . . neither is he to be ignored. *In Ole Virginia* deserves better of your critic than does much that is religiously treasured as a heritage from the Holy Roman Empire. And it is not possible, yet a while, to dismiss *Meh Lady* to a curt oblivion. *Marse Chan.* . . .

Marse Chan, the first of Mr. Page's stories, was published in 1884. Of its writing he tells us: "A friend showed me a letter which had been written by a young girl to her sweetheart in a Georgia regiment, telling him that she had discovered that she loved him, after all, and that if he would get a furlough and come home she would marry him; that she had loved him ever since they had gone to school together in the little schoolhouse in the woods. Then, as if she feared such a temptation might be too strong for him, she added a postscript in these words: 'Don't come without a furlough; for if you don't come honorably I won't marry you.' This letter had been taken from the pocket of a private dead on the battlefield of one of the battles around Richmond, and, as the date was only a week before the battle occurred, its pathos struck me very much. I remember I said, 'The poor fellow got his furlough through a bullet.' The idea remained with me, and I went to my office one morning to write *Marse Chan,* which was finished in about a week."

It won immediate recognition and praise. It is unduly sentimental, perhaps, but the South was then, as always, fired with feelings of home and family that seem to the less close-knit North a little far-fetched.

Mr. Page is a Virginian; he idealizes, no doubt, but it is of a Virginia that he knows to have existed that he tells, Virginia before the war and during the reconstruction period.

Mr. Page—appointed American Ambassador to Italy, June 21, 1913—is a Virginian, born on the old plantation of Oakland in Hanover County, April 23, 1853. He descends from two governors of the state, one, Thomas Nelson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was, report says, a rather precocious boy, entering Washington and Lee University when only sixteen years of age, remaining there three years, and then—after spending a few months in Kentucky—transferring to the law department of the University of Virginia. He finished in about half the time usually required, and took up the practice of law in Richmond, 1875-93. For long he was faithful to his profession, but what is the law when set beside the creation of Uncle Billy?

CHAPTER XXIV

ROBERT HERRICK

"I am afraid I have been very little tolerant of the merely entertainment aspect of fiction," says Mr. Robert Herrick. "The magazine story and the boy-and-girl novel have no significance to me whatever. Little more has the adventure tale of cowboys and Alaska. All that seems to me *meretricious* and *ephemeral*. Since Howells' strong earlier work, I consider that there has been little American fiction of good quality,—Frank Norris, London, some of Phillips' books, two or three volumes of Mrs. Wharton, are among these. I feel that American novelists are afraid of being dull, and have the irritating American defect of not taking themselves seriously enough."

The criticism is just, though somewhat over-emphatic. Dreiser and Hergesheimer and Cabell (to name but three) are serious, detailing their situations with all that is relevant, never (so far as I know) smart or false to their standards for the sake of effect. And the boy-and-girl novel depends, for its value as literature, not upon the plot or the age of the boy and girl, but upon its telling—whether it be *Romeo and Juliet* or a magazine story. American fiction suffers not so much because it is a tale of adventure, merely entertaining, as from the narrow view of life

taken by our novelists—a world from which Falstaff and Omar and Rabelais are banished—a world in which Eve is rather the mother of sin than (in a truer sense than ever the Virgin was) the mother of Man.

But I grow serious myself, and your critic must laugh and make a mock of art as it is practiced in the suburbs lest, seeing the True Romance in filthy rags, torn by the touch of prentice hands, he mistake her for an impostor and, unwitting, revile her openly in the marketplace.

Mr. Herrick was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 28, 1868, and educated at the Cambridge Latin School and at Harvard, where he graduated with the class of 1890. His father, Dartmouth, '35, a lawyer practising in Boston, was the author of several legal books, notably *The Town Officer,* which is, so I am told, still in use. With him the academic tradition begins. All the earlier Herricks, in this country, were farmers. The original ancestor, a nephew of the poet's—the name Robert appears in every generation—settled in Salem in 1638. "My father's branch of the family," says Mr. Herrick, "moved, in two hundred years, about thirteen miles, to Boxford, Mass. (near Andover), where my uncle still cultivated the ancestral farm quite profitably, ran a saw-mill and a cider-mill, as well as a herd of cattle, all of which were familiar memories of my youth, for we spent about five months of the year in an old French-and-Indian-War house with a double cellar, about a mile from the Herrick place. Until I went to college, Boxford had more significance to me than Cambridge. My mother's family came from Boxford. Her father (an Emery)

was, for fifty years, pastor of the First Congregational church at Weymouth, near Boston. (The immediate families related to us—Hale, Welsh, Manning and Peabody—were preserved in the middle names of my brothers and sisters; I doubt if a single one of my ancestors came to this country later than the middle of the seventeenth century; this shows the thorough New Englandism of my descent—and, by the way, the Manning, my grandmother's family, was related to Hawthorne.) My grandfather Emery was said to have been something of a revivalist in his early years; also to have loved a good horse; and, for a fact, he raised a family of three children, sent them all to good schools, and saved quite a small competency, all on a salary that was not over one thousand dollars a year. He was a charming old gentleman—and very much the gentleman, as I have heard Mrs. William James, who, in her youth, was one of his parishioners, often declare.

"My course of study at college was largely literary. At that time the English department, under Child, Adams Sherman Hill and Barrett Wendell, was especially strong. Hill and Wendell had created the new method of teaching composition. I had always wished to write, and it was but natural that I should gravitate toward courses in English composition; also into the editorship of the *Harvard Advocate;* and, later, of the *Harvard Monthly*. There was, at that time, a brilliant set of young men of literary tastes, among whom were George Santayana and Norman Hapgood; also the poet Moody and Mr. R. M. Lovett, now editing *The Dial* in New York. All these men and many others,

were editors of the *Harvard Monthly,* which had been founded in 1886 under the influence of Mr. Wendell—and it did more for me than anything else Harvard offered me, both the exercise of writing for it and the association with the other editors.

"The year '87, however, I spent, not at college, but in travel. A friend and classmate who had broken down in health, asked me to become his traveling companion, and, together, we made a long journey from New York to the Bahamas, Cuba, Mexico, California, Alaska, returning by the Yellowstone Park to Colorado and the East. For a boy of eighteen, who had never been out of the state of Massachusetts except for a brief visit to Broadway, once, such a journey covering nine months was a revelation of romantic scenery, strange peoples, as well as the vast extent of our own nation. I remember with special vividness the weeks spent in Mexico, also the month spent in the Yosemite Valley, which was then a wild and remote paradise. On the way to Alaska we were joined by my friend's father, together with President Gilman of Johns Hopkins, and Professor Louis Dyer of Oxford. There were also on the boat Mr. Butler, then an instructor at Columbia, and various notables of the United States Senate, who amused themselves with poker in an inside cabin while we journeyed through the marvelous glacier scenery of the far north. That year of travel was undoubtedly worth a great deal more to me than several years of college. At any rate, it awakened my appetite for travel, of which I have done a good deal in later years.

"As the spring of 1890 drew close, it became im-

perative that I should find some job. I had written a good many stories for the college magazines—I had, as editor-in-chief, nearly wrecked the *Harvard Monthly* financially by publishing the first English translation of Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea.* But my ideals in literature had been formed largely on the contemporary French school, which would not assist me in placing my fiction with the American magazine of that time. One of my college friends, Professor George Carpenter, was undertaking to organize an English department in the Massachusets Institute of Technology and asked me to join him. I taught there for three years under Professor Carpenter, and learned my profession from him. When he was called to Columbia, in 1893, I accepted a call to the new University of Chicago, to organize the teaching of rhetoric and English composition on the Harvard method. I can very well remember the forbidding aspect of the unfinished buildings, the muddy and unfinished campus and the variegated stretch of the Midway, on which the University fronted, which was then in full blast during the closing weeks of the great World's Fair. To plunge from orderly Boston and more orderly Cambridge into the unfinished bustle of Chicago and the World's Fair was a large experience for a young man of twenty-six.

"I have retained my connection with the University of Chicago ever since 1893, although, of late years, I have not been in residence except for three or six months of the year, and have been relieved of departmental and faculty routine. I may say, here, that I have not found any inherent antagonism between teach-

ing and writing, both of which I have practiced constantly; and I have never, in the twenty-five years of my connection with the University, felt in the slightest degree hampered in anything I have written or said. I had begun to publish stories before I left Boston, the first one in *Scribner's Magazine,* to be followed shortly by several in the *Atlantic Monthly;* and, in 1896, while I was in Europe on a year's absence, began my first novel. From that time, my books came on about every other year for the next fifteen years or so. While I was writing novels, I also edited manuscripts, collaborated in a textbook for secondary schools, which has had a long and lucrative career; wrote stories and articles for the magazines; in short, did all the many necessary journeyman jobs. But the main thing was the novel! I wrote my novels, usually, in the long vacations which I took from University work somewhere in the East, in the New England country. *Together* was written partly during the year spent in Cornish, N. H., partly in a cold winter at Bethel, Me. Other books written in the solitude and beauty of that little Maine town, near the White Mountains, were *The Healer,* and *The Master of the Inn.*

"Of late years, I have lived, during half the year, on the Maine seacoast, near Portsmouth, in York Village, where I have a small house and a few acres. There I have written *His Great Adventure, Clark's Field, The Conscript Mother,* and *The World Decision.* I lead a very simple life, writing three or four hours in the morning and spending the rest of the day in my garden or walking in the country. I find that city life fatigues me and distracts my attention from my

work. My stories come to me in solitude and in the country.

"To return, for a last few words, to my contribution to the American novel: you will find my critical opinions on the subject in a two-part article published in the *Yale Review* during 1915. I think the one subject, consciously or unconsciously, always to be found in my books is the competitive system—its influences upon men and women. Whenever I look back into these books, I find the one insistent question implied in almost every chapter, 'What is success?' Various forms of success and the interpretation of success are there portrayed. Of course, the novels differ widely in point of view, and in background. Many of the early ones were concerned with business because, although I have never had direct business experience, I have lived many years of my life in a great business center, where commercial life was the one dominant interest and commercial standards were the standards of the community. Looking at the books from another angle, you will find they fall into two classes,—those strictly of realistic technique, such as *The Memoirs of an American Citizen* and *The Common Lot;* and those of a freer, more poetic technique, such as *The Real World, A Life for a Life,* and *Clark's Field.* I need scarcely say that these latter are the books nearer my heart, but they are not the ones which appeal most widely to the public."

CHAPTER XXV

HAROLD MACGRATH

Questioned by the late Joyce Kilmer as to what is the matter with contemporary fiction, Mr. Harry Leon Wilson answered, "Cherchez la femme!"

Or blame the women! The charge is as old as Adam.

"I know little about literature," Mr. Wilson is reported as saying, "but if you mean the novel, I should say that the influence most harmful to its development is the intense satisfaction with it as it is, of the maker, the seller, and the buyer. And to trace this baneful satisfaction to its source, I should say it lies in the lack of a cultivated taste in our women readers of fiction."

How about a lack of taste in the men readers? The answer is, according to Mr. Wilson, simple: "Publishers are agreed that women buy the great bulk of their output." The inference being that men, as a lot, do not read at all—save the newspapers; they have no influence of any kind, good, bad or indifferent . . . except, perhaps, as authors. And then?

"The current novel is as deliberately planned to please the woman buyer as is any other bit of trade goods. The publisher knows what she wants to read, the writer finds out from the publisher, and you can

see the result in the advertisements—and the writer's royalty statements."

The writer and the publisher, then, sell out to the woman-buyer? Certainly. "A publisher with ideals of his own couldn't last," says Mr. Wilson, "any longer than a grocer with ideals of his own, or a clergyman."

The publisher is in business to make a living—but why blame the women? Surely they are charitable in keeping him alive—without ideals of his own . . . and with such writers. Because the market calls for bacon hogs, and I raise bacon hogs, must I go round saying that I would raise lard hogs if the buyers would only let me—a man can die rather than steal or gain money in ways that fail to suit his honor. But your publisher is very well satisfied. "Oh, take the Cash," he says with Omar, "and let the Credit go."

And would any man write an impossibly awful, sugar-coated novel if he were capable of writing *Richard Feverel?* The proof is that Meredith wrote no such books as are usual in America—such books as make even the authors bow their heads in shame.

But all this does not explain away Mrs. Wharton, George Eliot, Miss Jessie Rittenhouse, Mrs. Atherton, Madame Sand, nor the thousands upon thousands of women that are as cultivated as any novelist (or critic, for that matter) that ever lived—nor does it begin to explain the fine taste of Miss Edith Wyatt—the wit of Miss Clare Kumner.

The truth seems to be that women read though their taste be as uncultivated as a hedgerow, whereas uncultivated men are merely oafs. So, it is for the

uncultivated women in their hundreds of thousands that publishers publish rather than for the cultivated few, either men or women, who joy in literature? Not at all. Such good books as come along are always published. The root-trouble is: they are rather hard to write.

But matters might be worse. I rode up beside a factory girl in the street-car yesterday and she was reading *The Gadfly,* a corking yarn, written by a woman.

However, I was intending to speak of Mr. Harold MacGrath who writes, I judge, primarily for the market, to please the ladies. And surely for all our fine talk of art and capital a's, this is no mean ambition. For what is art? 'Tis not hereafter; present mirth, etc.

Mr. Harold MacGrath was born at Syracuse, New York, on September 4, 1871. He was educated there; he still lives there; and there in 1890 he took up with journalism. In 1899 he published his first book, *Arms and the Woman*—the title has since been used by others: it is apparently a good title. But in 1901, he moved into that "imaginary Central Europe which lies somewhere east of Dresden, west of Warsaw, and north of the Balkans" (where he had visited with the woman), to write *The Puppet Crown, The Grey Cloak* and *The Princess Elopes,* returning to this country for a triumph with *The Man on the Box.* As a boy, though doubtless most humbly in the minority, I read and enjoyed all five of these early books of Mr. MacGrath's—but I have completely forgotten them, probably outgrown them, and so no damage done to Mr.

Wilson's theory. Nor need I feel ashamed, for "those tales were" (Mr. Maurice has since said) "in the first rank among the thousands of stories that about that time were being written about the fanciful kingdoms and principalities, and the natural gift for story-spinning that the author showed then has been in evidence in his subsequent tales in other fields: perhaps those most conspicuous on the score of popularity have been *Half a Rogue*, *The Goose Girl*, *The Carpet of Bagdad*, and *The Voice in the Fog*."

CHAPTER XXVI

PETER CLARK MACFARLANE

It is the habit of novelists to make mock of reviewers, to insist that they have no sense of discrimination, that their influence upon literature is rather evil than good. So I have been reading the reviews of Mr. Peter Clark Macfarlane's latest volume, *The Crack in the Bell*—described on the wrapper as "a story of love and politics in a great American city, dealing impartially with the socially elect and the submerged tenth."

But the reviews are instructive. . . . *The Crack in the Bell.*

"A crack on the head," says the *New York World,* "from a policeman's club first puts young Jeremiah Thomas Archer to sleep, and then awakens him to the need of a thorough overhauling of Philadelphia as to its civic establishment." Amusing, and to the point.

"Politics has been pretty rotten in California," says the Sacramento *News,* "but never quite as bad as it is in Philadelphia, if we take the picture that Peter Clark Macfarlane gives us in his latest book." Mr. Macfarlane lived in California for a number of years; doubtless he too thought politics "pretty rotten" out there—but why despair? he said to his neighbors; they are even worse in Philadelphia, and they survive. So

he brought some cheer and hope into the dismal offices of the Sacramento *News*.

"Philadelphia is the scene of the story," says Miss Dorothy Scarborough. "The plot is rather complicated. A couple of love affairs are mixed up with politics, and events move with rather more swiftness than credibility. All sorts of men and women figure, from policemen to the aristocratic boss of the city, from Jewish sidewalk merchants to young girls in society. The humble characters are realistic and convincing, but the cultured ones are mechanical and unlifelike. Mr. Macfarlane has made special investigations of political conditions for his magazine articles and his work in that line is sincere and frank. In this novel he tells much of political methods that voters would do well to think about."

I repeat, the reviews are instructive; and any one who can't form a fair estimate of the book from them, had better read it to judge for himself—'twill be no waste of anybody's time.

For my part, I am inclined to agree with the New York *Evening Post:* "We wish to be generous; there are, no doubt, many persons of discriminating taste who, impressed by the realistic settings, will be thrilled by the large dose of romance," etc.

Mr. Macfarlane was born in St. Clair County, Missouri, March 8, 1871, the son of James Clark and Mary Elizabeth (Sperry) Macfarlane. He attended the Florida Agricultural College, at Lake City, from 1885-7. He married, for the first time, in 1891, again in 1909. From 1892 to 1900 he was in Los Angeles with the general freight department of the Atchison,

Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad. Then for a year he was on the stage with various stock companies, touring the Pacific Coast. In 1902 he was made pastor of the First Church (Disciples of Christ), Alameda, Cal. And in 1909, he became general secretary of the Men's Brotherhood of Disciples of Christ, with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, travelling an average of 50,000 miles a year. Since 1909 he has devoted his entire time to literary work and to lecturing, contributing short stories, serials, magazine articles to *McClure's, American, Collier's,* the *Saturday Evening Post.* He now lives in New York City; though, for some months past, he has been overseas.

"When I am forty," he is reported as saying, early in his twenties, "I shall begin to write fiction, and I shall write a novel." *Held to Answer,* a best-seller, was that novel—*The Crack in the Bell* postdating it by two years.

Mr. Macfarlane's Works Include:

The Quest of the Yellow Pearl (1908), *The Centurion's Story* (1910), *Those Who Have Come Back* (1914), *Held to Answer* (1916), *The Crack in the Bell* (1918).

CHAPTER XXVII

HARRY LEON WILSON

Though (as I have probably pointed out) very far from being the most thoughtful of critics, Mr. Harry Leon Wilson—praised as a satirist by Mr. Howells—editor of *Puck* from 1896-1902, author of *The Spenders* and *The Seeker,* is not at all *Chapter XXVII* when considered as a humorist, when overheard *Somewhere in Red Gap* in conversation with Mrs. Lysander John Pettengill, mistress of the Arrowhead Ranch—or when competing with *Puck* as a mischief-maker, calling Demetrius in the voice of Lysander, distilling the juice of unearthly poppies into the eyes of sleepless lovers, making of Bunker Bean such a May-night monster for Titania as has not appeared among mortals since Bottom roared, calling the hosts of fairy to wait upon his whim—or when "moving a continent to laughter" (as he is said to have done) "by the dexterity with which he confronts the very British Ruggles with the complicated problems of social life in the neighborly town of Red Gap," somewhere in the West—or when, as in a recent letter, writing of his son and heir, who is "still considerable under the kindergarten age":—

"We at first fondly believed him to be a healthy, normal infant. Imagine, then, our horrid shock at

discovering him to be embellished with eye-lashes and dimples—eye-lashes that long (or maybe one em-dash longer) and one brazenly-yawning cavity of a dimple smack in the middle of each cheek! I am not commonly a pessimist, but I am unable to contemplate his future with any proper hope. It almost seems that before he is twenty he will have to be taken out behind the barn and shot. Lacking this or some equally drastic measure of alleviation, I figure in the prime of young manhood—one of those flabby youths with a premature paunch—even now a dreadful threat of this!—sloppy in dress (egg on his shirt front!), by some inexplicable fatality always needing a shave, twisting a long silken mustache, terrifically working eyebrows and dimples, a mandolin player of moderate skill—singing mushy ballads of his day in a throaty tenor, to the life-servitude of some impressionable girl with a knack for laundry work."

The humor, true, depends upon your knowing that all boys of twenty-one, with premature eyebrows and dimpled cheeks, are the college youth to whom the Cornell *Widow* (long ago when I was in my nonage) applied the Tennysonian saw—"in the spring a young man's fancy"—adding approvingly, "You bet he is," and not upon the age-old follies of adolescence; it is a humor of phrase and perversion, other than that humor of Mr. White's:—

"Do you want work?" asks Daly, in *The Blazed Trail*, of a big, awkward lumberman.

"Yes, sir," was the uncomfortable reply.

"What do you do?"

"I'm a cant-hook man. . . ."

"All right; we need cant-hook men. Report at camp seven. . . ." And Daly looks at the man to dismiss him with an air of finality—but the lumberjack lingers uneasily in the doorway, twisting his cap in his hands. . . .

"Anything more you want?"

"Yes, sir. If I come down here and tell you I want three days off and fifty dollars to bury my mother, I wish you'd tell me to go to hell! I buried her three times last winter. . . ."

A quotation (from the early Mr. White) not, perhaps, as sophisticated in its wit as is the quotation from Mr. Wilson, but one more universal in its truth—the truth of King David: all men are liars. Mr. Wilson's funmaking is more purely local in its application, a joking that has to be translated to be comprehended abroad, the fun of exaggeration that lends point to *Punch's* . . .

"Isaac Denbigh, of Chicago, is, we are told, one hundred and thirteen years of age. He must try again. We expect better things than this of America." Mr. Wilson's is a ridicule of taking one's self too seriously—of taking, as one naturally might, one's child without a chaser, straight.

But Mr. Wilson cannot be judged by a single quotation—nor, possibly, by a thousand—not merely because, as is true, his invention runs ahead of his performance, but because that invention is of the best, is well-nigh the best of to-day. . . .

Bunker Bean, in an eighteen-dollar-suit of clothes, secretly in his heart despises the detachable cuffs of his millionaire employer, admires (as one knowing)

the elegance of Bulger, an "advanced dresser"—Bunker Bean is timid, sombre of wear, futile for all his hidden knowingness, until he learns, through a clairvoyant, that, in a previous incarnation, he, the bashful, the restrained, had walked the earth the great Napoleon. His life immediately changes; the spirit of the Corsican descends upon him; and . . . there is much human nature in such conceptions . . . the fooling is admirable . . . and the wording . . .

"We traversed a field," says Mr. Wilson, *Somewhere in Red Gap*, "where hundreds of white-faced Herefords were putting on flesh to their own ruin," passing out through a gate "that could be handled ideally only by a retired weight lifter in barbed-wire-proof armour," a gate facetiously named the "Armstrong," a gate such as Mrs. Pettengill affected to the inconvenience of the strangers within. . . . "I rapidly calculated," continued Mr. Wilson, "with the seeming high regard for accuracy that marks all efficiency experts, that these wretched devices cost her twenty-eight cents and a half each *per diem*. Estimating the total of them on the ranch at one hundred, this meant to her a loss of twenty-eight dollars and a half *per diem*. I used *per diem* twice to impress the woman"—he was riding the ranch with the owner, a widow, the Mrs. Pettengill whom I have mentioned. "I added that it was pretty slipshod business for a going concern, supposing—sarcastically now—that the Arrowhead was a going concern. Of course, if it were merely a toy for the idle rich. . . .

"In the shadowed coolness, aching gratefully in many joints, I had plunged into the hammock's

Lethe, swooning shamelessly to a benign oblivion. Dreamless it must long have been, for the shadows of the ranch house, stable, hay barn, corral, and bunk house were long to the east when next I observed them. But I fought to this wakefulness through one of those dreams of a monstrous futility that somehow madden us from sleep. Through a fearsome gorge a stream wound and in it I hunted one certain giant trout. Savagely it took the fly, but always the line broke when I struck; rather, it dissolved, there would be no resistance. And the giant fish mocked me each time, jeered and flouted me, came brazenly to the surface and derided me with antics weirdly human. Then, as I persisted, it surprisingly became a musical trout. It whistled, it played the guitar, it sang. How pathetic our mildly amazed acceptance of these miracles in dreams! I was only the more determined to snare a fish that could whistle and sing simultaneously, and accompany itself on a stringed instrument, and was six feet in length. It was that by now and ever growing. It seemed only an attractive novelty and I still believed a brown hackle would suffice. But then I became aware that this trout, to its stringed accompaniment, ever whistled and sang one song with a desperate intentness. That song was *The Rosary*. The fish had presumed too far. 'This,' I shrewdly told myself, 'is almost certainly a dream.' The soundless words were magic. Gorge and stream vanished, the versatile fish faded to blue sky showing through the green needles of a jack pine. It was a sane world again and still (I thought) with the shadows of ranch house, stable, hay barn, corral, and bunk house going

long to the east. I stretched in the hammock. I tingled with a lazy well-being. The world was still, but was it—quite?" . . . And full awake he hears, etc.

Mr. Wilson has to his credit the following novels: *Zig Zag Tales* (1896), *The Spenders* (1902), *The Lions of the Lord* (1903), *The Seeker* (1904), *The Boss of Little Arcady* (1905), *Ewing's Lady* (1907), *The Man From Home* (with Booth Tarkington) (1908), *Bunker Bean* (1912), *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1915), *Somewhere in Red Gap* (1916), *Ma Pettengill* (1919).

CHAPTER XXVIII

OWEN WISTER

Mr. Wister is, as a rule, ignored by younger critics, and yet he ranks among the first several of our novelists. He has written much, in a somewhat affected style, that is fluently American—*U. S. Grant, a Biography, The Seven Ages of Washington, Lady Baltimore*—and his humor, as in *Philosophy 4,* is often spontaneous and delightful.

Yet I, too, find it anything but easy to sympathize with him, though he is, I grant you, well-intentioned —but hell is paved with good intentions, not with bad ones. He would better the world by living in it, make life beautiful, taking his cue from Ruskin; but, as Mr. Shaw has said, "it was easy for Ruskin to lay down the rule of dying rather than doing unjustly—death is a plain thing, justice a very obscure thing." Mr. Wister's philosophy is that "try and be better" which signifies nothing. He is rather obvious, begging all disputed points, than convincing when he would be plausible. Read the preface to *Members of the Family.* There is in it nothing that a schoolboy might not have thought—praise of John Singer Sargent bracketed with a plea that we name streets after Frederick Remington (à la the Quai Voltaire!) and so perpetuate the name of one whose fame should live

in his work, one who did as much as any other to discover the golden beauty of desert sands; follows a word concerning style; a curse upon that "herd of mismanagers at Washington that seems each year to grow more inefficient and contemptible"; and through it all runs, as *leitmotif,* a longing for the return of dead days.

Or take *The Seven Ages of Washington.* On page 3 he tells us that Washington, in one of his letters, wrote: "Our rascally privateersmen go on at the old rate;" and that the word "rascally" was taken out as indecorous in the first printing of those letters. And again: "Such a dearth of spirit pray God I may never witness again," becomes "Such a dearth of spirit pray God's mercy I may never witness again." "One hundred thousand dollars will be but a fleabite," is changed to "one hundred thousand dollars will be totally inadequate." With a fine show of impatience Mr. Wister cries out against such editing. It makes of Washington a "frozen image, rigid with congealed virtue, ungenial, unreal." We must, he says, have the whole truth or nothing. Then he gives us . . . the better part of valor. "Rascally," "fleabite," "pray God," we can away with; but "in certain of his letters" to his mother, "always beginning 'Honored Madam' according to the custom of their time, the language contains (and not wholly conceals) the struggle between the man's displeasure and the son's natural respect and affection"—in later days, his mother's conduct regarding money often caused Washington pain and mortification. Some of the paragraphs in those letters "make distressing reading"; and so "we turn

away, leaving them unquoted." In a word, Mr. Wister's courage is not equal to his creed—but a man must be ready to die for his faith if he would attain to greatness.

And so with *The Virginian.* Though I rode for several years in Montana and Oregon, it fails to move me—personally I much prefer Mr. Stewart Edward White's *Arizona Nights* or *The Desire of the Moth* by Mr. Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Mr. Wister's characters live too much on the surface; they register their emotions with the studied grace of movie men; there is in the heart of his tales no secret a spent runner can not read—but who knows the answer to the riddle of life? Not Mr. Wister surely.

So too with his indictment of Germany in *The Pentecost of Calamity.* Germany was the best regulated, the most orderly, the most obedient nation in Europe —but this in itself was no crime. At the word of command she was ready, efficient, prepared—and, on the instant, betrayed . . . rather, I believe, sinned against than sinning. It is all very easy to assail militarism as a menace to the peace of the world; yet eternal vigilance, not contented trust in destiny, is the price of liberty. Gerry went out to fight for his Fatherland or, at worst, for his life. "I enlisted in Glasgow to fight for my King and Country," said a convalescent Scotty to my friend the Skipper, "but when I got to France I found I was fighting for my bloody life." Some such rude awakening, for all the fine phrases on which he had been reared, must have come to Gerry too; and he has proved himself (ask those who faced him) a brave man. It is not neces-

sary—indeed, I doubt if it be possible—to forgive his rulers; but to refer to him as a beaten coward. . . .

Yet I must not quarrel further with Mr. Wister. He belongs to a past tradition, the ineffectual Puritan school that looks up to Mr. Howells as the critic par excellence, that, now and again, puts a stick between the spokes of that stage, the modern world, on which we ride toward—well, away from New England. Mr. Wister was born in Philadelphia, July 14, 1860. "The first ten years of my life," he says, "were spent in that part of the city known as Germantown. The Civil War furnished the first picture in my memory. Various of my relations would appear in uniform. The Great Sanitary Fair makes another picture in which the most vivid detail is a model of the ship that went to the Arctic with Dr. Kane. In connection with the war, too, I remember very distinctly going to rooms, where my mother worked with other ladies over what must have been bandages or clothing. At any rate, men in uniform fill these extremely early days, and made an impression which lasts. In the same way, I recall the morning when the news of the assassination of Lincoln arrived. I was not quite five years old, but I remember sitting at table and knowing that something terrible had happened because of the grief of my parents.

"I had a pony very soon in life, and learned to ride bareback on him. Riding has been my favorite exercise always. I went to various schools, and was a somewhat troublesome boy, I believe. I never played games very well. The game, that is now called hockey, and was then called shinney, was my favorite,

and the only one in which I could hold my own. I also learned to skate, and was very fond of this. I acquired the power and the desire to read to myself before I was six. The first book I remember so reading was *Grimm's Household Tales.* Soon after this, I remember *Alice in Wonderland,* but by the time this came out I could read fluently.

"From ten to thirteen I was in Europe, first, in school in Switzerland, where I had a very bad time, and then in a school in England, where I had a very good time. The third year of this journey I traveled with my parents, and passed the winter in Rome. At the school in Switzerland, I began to learn music, which has been my favorite interest ever since, far surpassing that of literature. There is no book in the world, with the exception of certain works by Shakespeare and Scott, of which I am so fond as I am of quite a good many pieces of music. In Switzerland I did some mountain climbing, and in England I played cricket, but never well. The school was at Kenilworth, and my memories of the castle are very vivid. I had relations in the neighborhood and saw a good deal, as a small boy, of the very best kind of English people.

"In 1873 I went to St. Paul's School, Concord, N. H., and was there for five years. I then went to Harvard College. Through these years my chief interest was the study of music and my chief pleasure in out-of-doors exercise, horse riding, but the winter sports at St. Paul's School I enjoyed extremely. I also rowed on a crew and played cricket on a team at St. Paul's School, but never did either of these things well. About this time I began to be interested in the

West, and was very proud of owning moccasins and going about the woods in them. I had a gun and learned how to shoot it. I never shot particularly well with a shotgun and could always do better with a rifle.

"During these years I had very excellent training in English. I have seen no training since that equaled it, or came near equaling it. The teaching of English to-day is distinctly inferior to the manner in which I was taught. The classics also were made very interesting to me, both Greek and Latin, and these also I was well taught, especially at St. Paul's School. I do not think the teaching at Harvard College equaled that I had at St. Paul's School, either in English or in the classics. My reading was quite desultory, and I never cared for it so much as I did for music. Graduating in 1882, with highest honors in music and the *summa cum laude* degree, I went to Europe, where I passed a year and a half. I was advised by Franz Liszt to become a composer, and I studied under Guiraud in Paris. Circumstances made this impossible, and I came home and had a position as clerk in a bank. At this time my health broke down and I spent my first summer, namely 1885, in Wyoming.

"I entered the Harvard Law School in 1885, graduating there in 1888. During this time I had been to Wyoming twice again, camping, fishing, and hunting big game, as well as to other parts of the West, and this had become my chief interest. During these and following years I spent much time at Western military posts. In 1889 I entered the Bar at Philadelphia and practiced for a short time, but soon took to writing stories. How I came to do this, I have told in

the preface to one of my books, viz., *Members of the Family.* I devoted my attention more and more to writing stories and gradually ceased to be anything but an official lawyer, having no practice and wishing none.

"My first books were jocose affairs—a three-act comic opera for the Harvard Hasty Pudding Club, entitled *Dido and Æneas;* a parody of the *Swiss Family Robinson;* a burlesque romance, entitled *The Dragon of Wantley* (1892)."

In the preface to *Members of the Family,* he tells how "writing had been a constant pastime since the school paper; in 1884 Mr. Howells (how kind he was!) had felt" his "literary pulse and pronounced it promising; a quickening came from the pages of Stevenson; a far stronger shove next from the genius of *Plain Tales from the Hills;* during an unusually long and broad wandering through the Platte Valley, Powder River, Buffalo, Cheyenne, Fort Washakie, Jackson's Hole, and the Park, the final push happened to be given by Prosper Mérimée;" he had with him the volume containing *Carmen,* his favorite among all short stories. So was inspired a traveler's tale, to be written down after getting home—he "left some good company at a club dinner table one night to go off to a lonely library and begin it"—and to be sent off with a second, to Franklin Square, and so accepted by Mr. Alden for *Harper's.*

In 1896 Mr. Henry James sat with him and went over his first book, patiently and carefully.

Mr. Wister has written for *The Saturday Evening Post,* and, concerning *Musk-ox, Bison,* etc., for Whitney's American Sportsman's Library.

CHAPTER XXIX

HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON

In *The Advance of the English Novel,* Professor William Lyon Phelps hails Henry Sydnor Harrison, author of *Queed,* as "more than a clever novelist . . . a valuable ally of the angels." Let me quote from a letter written by Mr. Harrison some time in March, 1915, at Dunkirk in France: "I expect to have my own ambulance to run after a while." (Running after one's own ambulance is not exactly what I should expect, but then I am not a clever novelist). "We make our headquarters in the railroad station, and have a shed as big as a hall bedroom to sit in when not transporting *malades* and *blessés.* I am sitting there now on a hard bench with no back at a table of dirty bare boards, with people swarming all over me and much noise. . . . I have heard the guns rumbling, too. . . . I forgot to say that I wear a khaki uniform and would be mistaken (at a long distance) for a soldier." Sitting on a hard bench . . . hearing afar off the guns that call, imperious and proud, that summon the brave to a hasty espousal with death . . . childishly pleased when mistaken, now and again, from a great distance, for a soldier . . . this man, had he been other than he is, might have seemed "an ally of the angels" to men better able to judge of such com-

parisons than ever Professor Phelps was . . . with a flaming ardor that knew no self, a passion of service wasting no strength in hatred of the foe, he might have made of that uniform, so like a soldier's, a symbol seen beyond the bounds of nationality and creed.

But I shall not attempt to criticize Mr. Harrison or his work lest I run amuck and be shot down like a mad dog. *Queed* is the only one of his books that I have ever read (it has sold upwards of a hundred and fifty thousand copies—"one of the finest achievements in the whole history of first novels," his publishers declare)—and (if I remember rightly) it amused me no end at the time. . . . I was twenty, twenty-one, and laying bitulithic pavement at Corvallis, in Oregon. Queed is a solitary, somewhat pedantic young man who drifts mysteriously into a Southern city, settles down in a boarding-house, and applies himself to the composition of a learned tome on "evolutionary sociology"; I was your average young American, seeking his fortune from the bottom up, in love with every other girl in Portland—we met . . . and part to go our different ways . . . no more.

Shortly after Mr. Harrison's birth at Sewanee, Tennessee, February 12, 1880, his father resigned the professorship in Latin and Greek at the University of the South, and moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he founded the Brooklyn Latin School. There Mr. Harrison grew up, a student at his father's school, and later an A.B. at Columbia. For three years he helped his father as a teacher. Then his father died and the family moved to Richmond.

"As a kind of natural recoil from the cloisterliness

of the schoolmaster's life," says Mr. Harrison, "I had an earnest ambition to whirl in the business world, and the result of this desire was a partnership with a man to manufacture bamboo furniture. The enterprise lasted about a year, cost me a pretty penny and cured me of addiction to commerce. . . . About the time I was winding up the bamboo works, my friend, Mr. John Stewart Bryan, whose family owns the Richmond *Times-Dispatch,* invited me to join the *Times-Dispatch* staff as a book-reviewer. I accepted. . . . I was soon set to paragraphing; next to rhyming; before a great while to writing editorials; and as the years ran on, I turned over the reviewing to another hand, and gave all my time to the editorial page. Finally, in November, 1908, circumstances made a reorganization of the staff necessary, and I was appointed chief editorial writer. The post was in every way a desirable one; but newspaper work was never my goal; my whole heart was never in it; I always wanted to write books; and when I had put by enough to stand off the wolf for a few months, I burned my bridges by resigning my position and claiming all my time for my own work. I could give myself a year's chance, and I thought that if I ever could do anything, I could do it in a year. . . . In the meantime, my brother had removed to Charleston, West Virginia, to practice law, my mother and sister had followed him, and, finding myself no longer bound to any particular chair, I joined them within a few days after my resignation went into effect. . . .

"The point of origin of my desire to write is shrouded in obscurity, but I think it must date back

to an early period. When I was nineteen, I sold a short story to the *New York Sunday Herald*—I got $11 for it, I think—and that was the first money I ever got out of fiction. By the way that was hardly fiction, after all, for though I gave it a fictional form, the incident I recounted had really happened to an acquaintance of mine. A year or two later I had two little stories in the 'Editor's Drawer Department' of *Harper's*. In the years that have since elapsed I have published a number of short stories—perhaps ten or twelve in all—scattered around in various magazines."

He received the M.A. degree from Columbia in 1913, is unmarried, a Democrat, an Episcopalian, Member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, author of *Captivating Mary Carstairs, Queed, V. V.'s Eyes* and *Angela's Business*. Concerning *Angela's Business,* Marshall Field & Co., of Chicago, stated that it was the best selling novel in their book section during the Spring of 1915; "its appeal to women is reflected in its demand, which comes almost wholly from the gentler sex." Perhaps this atones for my indifference.

CHAPTER XXX

JOSEPH CROSBY LINCOLN

"Cape Cod?" said Mr. Lincoln. "Well, I ought to know the folk of Cape Cod. I was born there,—at Brewster, Mass., February 13, 1870—lived there all my youth, and since leaving I can't remember ever having missed visiting the Cape during the year. Sometimes I've only gone there for a few days, often for months; but I always go back; I suppose it's the call of my blood.

"My father was a sea captain, so was his father, and his father before him, and all my uncles. My mother's people all followed the sea. I suppose that if I had been born a few years earlier, I would have had my own ship. But when it came time for me to earn a living, the steamship was driving the old square rigger out of existence, and the glorious merchant marine that we had built up in the first part of the nineteenth century was fading into tradition.

"So when my mother and I were left alone in the world, since I was to be a business man, it was decided that I had better not waste time going to college. We went to live in Brooklyn and I entered a broker's office. It was not work to my liking, however, for I wanted to draw, and eventually, under the guidance of Henry Sandham, whose familiar signature was

'Hy,' I went to Boston. There I took an office with another fellow and we started to do commercial work. We were not overwhelmingly successful, and often, to make the picture sell better, I wrote a verse or joke. Sometimes the verse or joke sold without the drawing. Shortly after this, Sterling Elliott, who was editor of the *League of American Wheelmen Bulletin,* sent for me and offered me a position as staff illustrator. I accepted. That was in the days when every one rode a bicycle, and the journal had a circulation of over a hundred and twenty-five thousand, so my verses and illustrations became known to a fairly large public.

"In the meantime I was back in Brooklyn, married to a Massachusetts girl, and doing considerable verse for various publications. They were mostly poems in dialect (that is, in the vernacular of the Cape), and I had almost unconsciously turned to the Cape for my inspiration. I sensed the fact that there is a subtle humor in the men and women of my own stock. Then, too, they were unusual characters, and the homes that made a background to their lives were picturesque to a superlative degree.

"It was about this time that I wrote my first short story. I went again to the Cape for my inspiration, drawing the type of man I know best for my central character, and the story sold to the *Saturday Evening Post.*

"And I have been writing fiction ever since. In 1904 my first novel, *Cap'n Eri,* was published. Other novels have followed with fairly annual regularity. They have all centered about Cape Cod and its people, for having thoroughly mastered the psychology of a

type of American that was known, appreciated, though through an economic law, fast becoming extinct, it seems best to keep on picturing these people. I have, of course, taken them away from the Cape, setting their individuality in various phases of life.

"The type of sea captain who figures in my stories has not necessarily an accurately corresponding type in my acquaintance. Going back to the Cape after having lived in New York and Boston, I was able to get varying angles on the lives of the men and women I had known in my childhood. The old sea captains that I remembered best as a child were of more than one character, classified according to their work. One was the dignified old man who had traveled to some far-away corner of the earth and returned prosperous, to spend the rest of his days as an autocrat among his own people. He had met strange peoples, he had been trusted with a ship, and, as in the days I write of there were no instantaneous means of talking across the oceans, he was shrewd at bargaining, and, being one of the owners of the ship, lost no chance to bring home a cargo that would bring rich returns. In other words, he was a shrewd trader as well as a sailing master. The same dignified bearing that he used in his trade followed him on land, and, though jovial in manner, he was developed in dignity and character.

"The other type of captain was more popular with the youngsters. He may have been as shrewd, and possibly made as much money, but he was filled with a greater sense of humor, and took life as a pastime. Men of this description would gather round the stove

and tell wonderful stories, though all sea captains talk *shop* when they get together.

"Then too there was what are termed the 'longshore captains.' These were mostly engaged in fishing, or in trading with coast towns and cities. They were necessarily more limited in their views, for they spent more time ashore, often working a good-sized garden, fishing when the spirit moved, and running a schooner to New York or Boston if the chance came. . . .

"The old captain was a picturesque character, and I wrote of him—the man who sailed the seven seas. In drawing the type, I did not choose one man—the various captains that have figured in my books are entirely fictitious—for it seemed to me that it was hard to find one man who could fulfill all the characteristics of one fictional character. My captains are composites of many men, as I felt that it is hardly fair to accurately describe a living man, when writing fiction. . . .

"The same is true with the other characters of my books. My Cape women are generally true to type—big-hearted, motherly women who loved the sea. My other characters, with the exception of the Portuguese, whom I occasionally mention as Cape dwellers, are obviously drawn from the city types one sees in everyday life. . . .

"After having studied the man, it is not difficult to imagine what he would do in certain society. In *Cap'n Warren's Wards* I took my Cape Codder to the city and showed that his high sense of what was right and wrong, and his saving sense of humor, were as much in evidence in one place as is another. In other

words, a good man is the same everywhere. And in *Kent Knowles,* I took my hero to England, and the contrast made the story a revelation of the Cape Cod type."

Elsewhere Mr. Lincoln has said: "I know there are people who can turn out a short story in two or three hours and it will be good enough to sell, but I cannot help feeling that it would have been much better if the writer had devoted more time to it. In my case, doing work that is satisfactory to me in any degree means that I must fairly sweat it out, if I may use the expression."

And again, in an interview for the Boston *Globe:* "A man writes what he knows. If he tries anything else it must fall—show hollow. And I find that it is necessary to write to your audience—that one must consider that a large number of his readers are to be women, and he must write things that will appeal to the women of to-day."

But Mr. Lincoln is no Sir Oracle. "Sweating" over a story will not necessarily improve the tale. Mr. Edwin Lefevre wrote *The Women and Her Bonds*—"which, without any hesitation," says Mr. Arthur B. Maurice, one-time editor of *The Bookman,* "is to be ranked among the really big short stories of American fiction." Mr. Edwin Lefevre wrote *The Woman and Her Bonds* at a single sitting before breakfast . . . and Lincoln's Gettysburg speech is anything but perspirational.

So, too, when the author of *Cap'n Dan's Daughter* speaks of humor: "Perhaps I could write a story with gloomy situations and an unhappy ending, but I

wouldn't like to try it. I would much rather try to make people cheerful and keep myself cheerful at the same time. There's enough sorrow in this world without finding it in books." Mr. Lincoln—and in this he is certainly one with the thoughtless folk who go to make up the great American reading public—would dismiss *Othello* and *Lear* as dismal and by no means as valuable as a torn and much-read copy of *Puck*. But I would not barter the tears of life for all the laughter of Cape Cod.

Mr. Lincoln lives at Hackensack, New Jersey, and is a member of the Hackensack Golf Club, and the Union League Club. He attends the Unitarian Church, and has been a member of its board of trustees for about ten years. For the past several years he has been a member of the Hackensack Board of Education. He is, so I hear on good authority, an extremely agreeable person, somewhat after the manner of the Justice in Shakespeare's Seven Ages, interlining his talk with quaint instances, proverbs of the sea, the natural wisdom of men who have learned from life rather than books. And, true to his endeavor, he keeps those about him cheerful and happy.

Mr. Lincoln's Works Include:

Cape Cod Ballads, Cap'n Eri, Parters of the Tide, Mr. Pratt, The Old Home House, Cy Whittaker's Place, Our Village, Keziah Coffin, The Depot Master, Rise of Roscoe Paine, Mr. Pratt's Patients, Cap'n Warren's Wards, The Woman Haters, Cap'n Dan's Daughter, Kent Knowles, "Quahaug," Thankful's Inheritance, Mary 'Gusta, Extricating Obadiah.

CHAPTER XXXI

FREEMAN TILDEN

I appealed to Mr. Freeman Tilden, author of *Khaki,* published June, 1918, dealing with Tredick—"Tredick is represented on the maps by a small round black dot; it has three churches, twenty-odd stores, several flourishing industries and a Carnegie Library; the main street is called Main Street, and the hotel is called the Commercial hotel"—I appealed to Mr. Freeman Tilden, author of *Khaki,* which tells how Tredick got into the war, to tell me something of himself, his methods of work, his way of life, his thoughts on literature. Under date of January 14th, 1919, Mr. Tilden wrote me a "long and rambling letter"—the phrase is his own—hoping that I might get "a glimpse of the person behind it." "It is not often that I write about myself," he says; "I think the only other time I ever told the story of my life was when I made out my questionnaire during the draft." For fear that he may never again tell that story and for the future reference of all literary historians I will quote him here at some length:—

"I was born in Malden, Mass. (near Boston), August 22, 1883. My paternal ancestors were English; they came from Tenterden, England, in 1628, eight years after the *Mayflower.* Maternal ancestry

is English-Irish. So far as I know, the Tildens, in that two hundred and fifty-odd years in America, were never engaged in purely intellectual occupation until my father, Samuel Tilden, became a newspaper editor, after having been a master printer. They had been shipbuilders, for the most part.

"As I grew up in the atmosphere of a newspaper office, it was not unnatural that I should follow in that business. My newspaper apprenticeship was at the *Boston Globe*. Afterwards I was with the *News and Courier* of Charleston, S. C., and then came to the *New York Evening Post,* where I did my last newspaper work. To say truth, the newspaper work never enthralled me. I regard it as a superior training-school; but the everlasting ineffectuality and 'dailiness' of it wore on me. I was not a good newspaper man. I could write entertainingly, but I never acquired the facility for intrusiveness, which is the reporter's stock in trade. After that, (after the newspaper training), I traveled a good deal in Europe and South America. By this, I do not mean that I went a-foot or adventurously. My notion of wild adventure would not lead me, at farthest, to do more than spend a night in a third-rate hotel. I marvel at those who 'tramp' abroad. To make a journey through Siam on foot is, to be sure, a novel experience; but I think as preparation for fiction one would do better to cultivate meetings of the Plumbers' Union or the Longshoreman's Literary Society or Grocers' Picnics. That is my notion; I claim no merit or originality for it."

Surely something of the man is here present between the lines. Having entertained but few illusions con-

cerning life, he has had but few disappointments. He was not disappointed when his first volume of fiction, *That Night and Other Stories,* a volume of satirical short stories collected from the magazines was a *succes d'estime* and not another *Soldiers Three.* It was printed here and in England and sold some two thousand copies—his readers were, as he says, truly adventurous. Yet he was not disappointed, because he regarded all his efforts as tentative. "I wanted to find out," he tells me, "whether there was a public in this country for a satire of a delicately wrought kind. I found out. There is not. In fact, there is not much of that public in the world; the older the culture (possibly) the larger the public, but it can never be large." Indeed those who care for the fine arts were never legion; and satire—satire serves no useful purpose, according to those who seek pleasure in their reading, ease and forgetfulness.

But "there is very little common-sense, however much nobility, in pressing the inhabitants of Panama to buy snow-shoes. Provided a man is cynical to begin with, he will never become a misanthrope because the world will not roll hoop with him—he will go to another world." So Mr. Tilden switched to popular fiction. The door to success as a popular writer leads through the *Saturday Evening Post;* and through that door Mr. Tilden passed to become the author of *Khaki.* It was (he confesses) didactic; it was unblushing; but it was sincere, and it had a large audience. Before that he had written other books with which we need not here concern ourselves—except that one (so he

believes), non-fiction, *Second Wind,* was a worthy bit of work and "has had good hospitality."

"I have a small farm in the Berkshire Hills," he writes—and he writes at length on farming for the *Country Gentleman.* Being a farmer myself I read his articles, though I seldom pay any attention to the advice he gives concerning "intensive-extensive farming." I do not believe that he himself practices what he preaches. In the winter he plans what he will do, large operations—"but when summer comes I am fatigued," he says, "so I sit on the porch and read books that were published prior to 1870. This does not mean that all books published prior to 1870 were good books. Far from it. Dreadful rot has been printed since the movable types came into use. But pitiless time has done the weeding.

"Neither my philosophy," he continues, "nor my position in life or literature are at all fixed. They are notably fluid. I try to maintain a policy of benevolent indifference—or, if that sound paradoxical, you might call it static good-will. My notion is that if you attend to your own moral and spiritual growth and improvement, other people will thrive better. I would as lief knock a man down and trample on him as prod him with unasked assistance. But if he be mentally sick, I will, if he seems to want it, practice any sort of buffoonery to laugh him into a better mood.

"I used to write for *Puck* in the old days when it was a humorous paper published by Keppler and Schwarzmann. So I passed, and do pass, for a humorist. But that I am surely not—at least, not in the common acceptation."

What remains? Mr. Tilden is very successfully and wholly married to a Vermont girl whose name was Mabel Martin; they have three children, two girls and a boy, and are (so he declares) "quite domesticated and happy."

CHAPTER XXXII

LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

"I had a thrill the other night," writes a correspondent to the London *Daily Mail:* "I encountered a badger on Hampstead Heath." Myself (with *Punch*) hesitate to think what he would have encountered if he had had two or three thrills—or if he had read more than one of Mr. Louis Joseph Vance's tales of mystery and adventure; perhaps the *Lone Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, Terence O'Rourke, Gentleman Adventurer* with a *Black Bag*, or the *Destroying Angel* come with a *Pool of Flame* in a *Brass Bowl* to drive him, a hunted, haunted reader of fiction, across the holiday Heath out into *No Man's Land.*

Listen to a rapid-fire description of the latest of these tales, *The False Faces*, in which Mr. Vance brings back to life his widely known character, Michael Lanyard, the Lone Wolf, amid scenes that carry one from the pock-marked ground where men, no mystery about it, fight and fall facing a trench-camouflaged, invisible foe, to the blazing lights of a garish New York café where German spies meet to plot their ways of wickedness. Mr. Vance introduces the central figure of his romance (first made famous as a thief of international reputation), in the guise of a spy devoted to the cause of the Allies—I

trust they are properly flattered, having converted a rogue to the service of humanity. . . . "The advantage is with him who fights on the offensive," philosophizes the extraordinary Mr. Lanyard—and upon this maxim conducts his war against the Prussians in such a manner that the mere record of his doings is (I am assured) "one of the most vivid, realistic and timely pieces of war fiction that has yet been written"—or, as the Oakland *Tribune* has it, "of its kind an extra good story" . . . "an amazingly convincing story of the activities of the Prussian spy system in our very midst," says the publisher.

All this makes me somewhat ashamed of my often-confessed horror of such tales, of my childish fear of ghosts and burglars—makes me as a critic somewhat slow in admitting that I have never been able to read any of Mr. Vance's books. They are of their kind, those in a position to know insist, of the first order. And Mr. Vance himself, Mr. Barr McCutcheon tells me, is a likable and interesting chap. He may be judged from a letter he wrote answering an appeal from me for autobiographic data:—

"Your request is, I find, one with which it is peculiarly difficult to comply. When an author begins to prattle about himself he commonly, in the end, stands self-revealed as an insufferable ass; the ego, being mildly petitioned to lay aside some of the vestments of its proper privacy, seems unable to refrain from stripping itself stark naked and running wild, with uncouth shouts. If I like an author or his work I never read the stuff he writes about himself for publication; otherwise I gloat over it. My own impres-

sion is that authors as a class are rather dull people who lead rather dull lives; a few, very few, are either offensively or pleasingly otherwise, depending on whether they know it or not. I believe their work should be judged and written about, not their personalities, providing they have anything of the sort. I can't imagine what there would be in my private life that would prove interesting to anybody except myself and my private friends. However, I'll do my best to answer your questions, in the hope that the information elicited will prove useful to you.

"I'm going on forty"—(he was born in Washington, September 19, 1879)—"I've been writing rather more than less steadily and voluminously since I was twenty. My family seems to have been middling respectable. My boyhood was normal. My schooling at Poly Prep (in Brooklyn) made no impression upon me of which I am now sensible. Of my maiden effort I retain an impression even more vague, though I believe it was, before its annihilation, what would to-day be termed a sex story. I travel when I can afford it, and like it, partly, I presume, because I can't work, or don't, away from every-day surroundings. My experience with the movies has been extensive and in the main profitable, but otherwise enervating. I get along very comfortably with the magazines and have never yet published anything in book form without first selling the magazine serial rights. My first novel was written in sixty days at the rate of fifteen hundred words a day and appeared serially in *Munsey's Magazine* and in no other form anywhere; it was a yarn of adventure. My latest is a study of one phase

of social life in New York and is so brief as to fall within the classification of 'novelette.' My literary passions are mostly prejudices; I like all sorts of books, but loathe the person who talks to me in a sympatheic manner about my stories of the sort that they call 'detective stories,' in spite of the fact that a detective seldom figures in any of them. Having written the other sort, the sort admired by these simple souls, I know that 'detective stories' are the most difficult of all to write, and would infinitely rather write five so-called psychological or social studies than one story of mystery and adventure. I haven't any hobbies that I know of. My way of work is, in my opinion, hard. My interests in art and life are comprehensive and catholic but, unfortunately I fear, not concentrated. I like dogs, cats, horses, boats, people, and other things that make me forget my job. I don't write verse. I don't think there's any fascination in the double B in titles or, unless it's uncommonly well done, in mystery and horror and spies.

"I'm afraid there's nothing to add to the above. I hope very truly that this doesn't seem an ungracious acknowledgment of your courtesy. It isn't meant to be. I've really tried very hard to think up something that would be entertaining to your readers, but somehow I don't find my subject matter inspiring."

CHAPTER XXXIII

HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

"It is his almost clairvoyant power of reading the human soul," says the Portland, Oregon, *Journal*, "that has made Mr. Wright's books among the most remarkable of the present age."

An instance from *The Winning of Barbara Worth*, perhaps his best and best-known novel:—

"She stood before him in all the beautiful strength of her young womanhood.

"He was really a fine looking young man with the appearance of being exceptionally well-bred and well-kept. Indeed the most casual of observers would not have hesitated to pronounce him a thoroughbred and a good individual of the best type that the race has produced. . . ."

The most casual observer, you will notice—in a word, Mr. Wright. To the more thoughtful Mr. Lincoln is the best type of individual that the race has as yet produced; and he was anything but a thoroughbred, anything but well-kept, with hands as huge and thick as a mallet, great bulging feet worn tough by traveling the road that leads to Calvary. . . .

Yet it may interest you to know that Mr. Wright was born at Rome, New York, May 4, 1872; that he was for two years a student in the preparatory depart-

ment of Hiram College, Ohio; that he has been successively sign-painter, decorator, landscape painter, and pastor of various churches in Missouri, Kansas and California; that his first book, *That Printer of Udell's,* having been published in 1903, to be followed by *The Shepherd of the Hills* in 1907, he retired from the ministry in 1908 to devote himself to writing; that he now lives in Los Angeles, California; and that over seven million copies of his eight novels have been sold —that he has, with the most meagre equipment, made his name a by-word in the land to all such critics as I am presumed to be (haughty and proud) and a blessing to the thousands upon thousands who crave to see their humble doings, their paper phantasies exalted and made memorable in the bright guise of a seeming romance—that he is one of the most remarkable creatures of our day and generation, a poor relation trailing behind Poe and Whitman and Dreiser into the realms of criticism, yet (by the astounding clamor he evokes) drawing all eyes; one easily explained (as by Mr. Cabell) but not to be explained away. . . .

His method of work deserves a moment's attention:—

"The system I use," says Mr. Wright, in an interview in the *Bookman,* "may have been used for centuries, or it may be no one else has ever used it. I have wondered whether it is old or new. Whichever it may be here it is. . . .

"When I start to write a novel, the first thing I do is to figure out why I am going to write it. Not what is the story, but why? I mull this over a while, and

when it is pretty straight in my mind, I write out an argument. . . .

"No suggestion of plot, you see. No incidents, scenes, location, nothing done at first except the argument, but it is the heart and soul of the novel. The novel is merely this argument presented through the medium of characters, plots, incidents, and the other properties of the story. . . .

"Next come the characters, each standing for some element or factor in the argument. Up to the last copying of the *Eyes of the World,* not a character has been named. They were called in the copy, Greed, Ambition, Youth, or whatever they represented to me in the writing of the story. . . ."

In a phrase, Mr. Wright seeks to prove some abstract notion of his own concerning good and evil by means of a picked assembly of human beings.

I discussed this way of writing with Mr. Percy Mackaye, pointing out that Mr. Wright had taken a leaf from Bunyan's book and set up as a progressive pilgrim, glimpsing afar the city of light—that *When a Man's a Man* is allegory.

Mr. Mackaye agreed that it should have been; but insisted that it was not true that any human being ever could have personified Greed or Ambition or Youth or anything else that Mr. Wright might arbitrarily decide they should represent when he sits down to write a story; that in changing Ambition to Bill Baldwin and Greed to Carlos Mackenzie and Youth to Viola Dana he was vilifying (or deifying, as the case might be) mankind—that he was guilty of bearing false witness against his fellow-man. . . .

All of which is true.

Further—Bunyan was a tinker and taking the language of tinkers, the vernacular of byway and tavern, moulding it to his uses, he immensely enriched our speech. John Millington Synge wrote under the roofs of those whose talk is racy of the soil, rugged and strong as the bare hills on which stray sheep nibble among the gorse. Mr. Wright sat at the feet of the prosaic, his English not so much of the earth as mine, and missed a golden opportunity; he tells of the West, the West where men are free to grow like weeds, rank and prolific; the West where women are gaunt and upright, withering slowly in the wind; the West where younger sons and cut-throats go to seek fortune—in the lifeless copy of exercise books.

The Titles of Mr. Wright's Novels are:

That Printer of Udell's (1903), *The Shepherd of the Hills* (1907), *The Calling of Dan Matthews* (1909), *The Uncrowned King* (1910), *The Winning of Barbara Worth* (1911), *Their Yesterdays* (1912), *The Eyes of the World* (1914), *When a Man's a Man* (1916), *Recreation of Donald Bret* (just announced).

CHAPTER XXXIV

ELIAS TOBENKIN

The family Bible in which births and deaths were recorded was lost early in his childhood, and Mr. Tobenkin is not certain whether he was born on the fourth or the eleventh of February, 1882. (Who's Who in America has hit upon the tenth as a likely date.) Of one thing, however, he is sure, and that is that he was born prematurely and in haste. He has in consequence always been just a little ahead of schedule. Sometimes the haste was of his own making—as when, long before Colonel Roosevelt, he coined the phrase "hyphenated Americans" to denote the unassimilated masses of our immigrant population—more often it was forced upon him from the outside.

An instance: He was reporting on the *San Francisco Examiner*. One evening in February, 1915, the managing editor came up to his desk and commissioned him to cover the Exposition for the paper. He was to go out the very next morning, and make a study of the grounds, buildings, exhibits, etc., and prepare six articles, giving a comprehensive and composite picture of the fair, to be used in the Sunday edition. The articles were to be ready in two weeks. Two days later the editor sent for him and asked if

the articles could not be finished in three days—nine days ahead of schedule—and they were. Mr. Tobenkin was rewarded by the M.E. with an assignment requiring even more speed.

He hails from Russia and is of Jewish extraction. Of the city of his birth he will not speak—though he thinks "one should be fond of one's birthplace and say nice things about it"—because that part of Russia has been for so long under German control that little now remains of the Old World he knew in childhood.

"My father," he says, "always remained a stranger in the town where I was born. For as long as I can remember I was his only confidant. Walking was a passion with him and from my third year I was his constant companion. As we went through the fields or up into the forest that skirted the edge of town he would tell me, dramatically, and with many a sweep of the hand, heroic tales out of the Old Testament. I was, therefore, familiar with a great part of its contents long before I knew the alphabet. It served as my first textbook. We journeyed with kings and prophets as we walked.

"My mother also played a great part in my early education, singing me songs in Russian and in Ukrainian, the yearning melancholy songs of the people. Wonderful songs they were, and it often happens, as I walk down Broadway, that something I see or hear recalls the past, the Old World, and then the noise dies down, the faces of people and of skyscrapers disappear in a haze, and I see before me my dead mother and hear her voice singing the old sad songs

of Russia. . . . Reality becomes a dream and the dream reality. . . .

"I was, for a long time, an only child and my father's hopes and ambitions were centered in me. It so happened that America early took hold of my imagination. My dreams were of America, my greatest wish to go there. In order that I might realize my dreams my father sailed for the New World. When he had prepared a home the family followed."

In 1905 Mr. Tobenkin graduated from the University of Wisconsin. In 1906, having specialized in German literature and philosophy, he received his Master's degree. He immediately went into newspaper work, reporting for the *Milwaukee Free Press* and, a year later, being turned loose on the town, doing special articles for the *Chicago Herald*. Then followed three years of free lance journalism in New York. In 1912 he returned to Chicago to accept a regular position with the *Tribune*. He had been on the staff for some months as special writer when the publisher, Mr. Joseph Medill Patterson, offered a prize for the best editorial on a non-political subject by any one on the paper not then an editorial writer. Mr. Tobenkin won the prize with an editorial concerning six men put to death in Sing Sing on one morning. He pointed out that America was not altogether blameless for the careers of these men. He showed how the neglect of the immigrant by American society indirectly helps to drive a great number to crime. He was immediately promoted to the editorial staff. Mr. Patterson said: "You have been showing us what you have seen in the slums; you

have given us the facts. Now give us the remedy. You have shown us the problem; show us the solution."

It was in this way that he became one of the chief interpreters of the immigrant and his life to the native American reader. In 1916, having covered the San Francisco Exposition for the Hearst Syndicate, he joined the staff of the *Metropolitan Magazine* to write on economics. He has filled in his spare time with articles and stories for the *Survey,* the *American Magazine, Harper's Weekly* and many another. He has written two novels.

The first of his novels, *Witte Arrives,* was published in 1916. It deals with a family of Jewish immigrants who settle in a small Middle-Western city and in especial with Emil, the youngest of three children, and his gradual transformation from a timid exile of the Pale into an upright American citizen. Aaron the father is a peddlar, a strictly orthodox Jew, who comes, despite his poverty, to hold a high place in the respect of his neighbors and to be the chief influence molding the character of his son. "Family life among the Jews," as Professor Lyon Phelps remarks, "has always been held up as a model to humanity, and the bond between father and son is portrayed in this novel with the beauty of holiness."

Yet the story is biographical rather than artistic. "I am trying to report life in my novels," says Mr. Tobenkin. And for him life is a serious business. There is the everlasting "bread and contentment" problem. Emil is attempting "to wrest from life the happiness which is his due." I do not think he can

prove his claim to happiness, but that is neither here nor there. He is earnest in his ambition. His story much resembles Mr. Tobenkin's. He graduates from the university and gets a job in the nearby city reporting obituaries and the doings of labor. He becomes deeply interested in the people of the tenements, studies their ways of work and play, writes sympathetically of their hopes and ambitions, tells of their despair, and makes for himself a place in the newspaper world. He marries young and the tale of his harassed home is recounted with a wealth of understanding detail. His wife Helen dies in child-birth, leaving him desolate, broken in health and spirit, just as life seemed to be opening to them the gates of an earthly paradise. He returns to the house of his father and the old man, widowed and lonely for his son, nurses him back to a faith in his own destiny. During a long convalescence he works on the novel which is to present to the great world the best of his thoughts and dreams wrung from the experience of youth by hands as gentle as a mother's. The novel almost complete, at the urgent request of his friend George Graves, night editor on a metropolitan daily, he returns to New York to become re-write man on the same paper. With the help of Graves and the aid and advice of Barbara Graves, his sister, the novel is whipped into final shape and accepted for publication. Witte has arrived.

Sincere and earnest, the book is nevertheless little better than a promise. There is about it too much of the raw and shallow inconsequence of youth, the sapient paraphrase of journalism that would at once

delight, instruct and uplift. The restless desires of the various characters, their ambitious struggles for wealth and fame, their tawdry disappointments, seem to one who has considered the lilies futile and empty of meaning. There is no laughter in the situations, no splendor as of setting suns that herald in the night when rest is sweetest. Mr. Tobenkin is alien to a world that in crimson and gold, with pomp of kings and ritual of priests, flaunting banners of war and gay festivals of carnival, makes beautiful the house in which its children dwell. To him the daisies swaying listless in the wind, the brook mocking with ripple of nonsense, the proudly steadfast trees, speak only of the vanity of vanities. His phrasing is often banal and commonplace, the same words recurring again and again in identical order; his English is sometimes atrocious.

But in *The House of Conrad,* published in 1918, his art has made great strides. It is an incomparably finer piece of work, "vastly bigger than his first novel," as Mr. F. T. Cooper insists contradicting the New *York Times.* It opens in the spring of 1866 when Gottfried Conradi arrives in New York from Germany, one of the first of the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle to come to America. In the Old World he had been a bookbinder, but the Germans in New York with whom he first became acquainted were for the most part cigar-makers, so he sets about learning the new trade. Within a year he had saved passage money for his Annchen and sent for her. They settle in Kleindeutchland on the east side. He dedicates himself, his son, *The House of Conrad,* which with

the birth of his son has come into existence, to the service of humanity. It is the history through three generations of that dedicated house which Mr. Tobenkin relates in this new novel with an intimacy of knowledge and a fairness of judgment that astounds and convinces the most casual of readers. He has observed his characters at home and on their walks about the world, eaten their bread and salt, drunk their water and wine. It is an amazing performance.

"America," to quote Mr. Cooper again, "so the author seems to say, is very patient with her new children, the immigrants. They come here arrogantly thinking to teach her. But through the slow attrition of years it is she who does the teaching. This is the essential point in a novel which in its breadth and far-reaching truth ranks very high among the best contemporary pictures of Americanism." It is a point highly flattering to native Americans. And yet that such a novel should be written by an immigrant affords evidence that America in offering a home to the driven exiles from Europe sometimes receives far more than she gives.

CHAPTER XXXV

ARTHUR BULLARD

Mr. Ernest Poole has very kindly contributed the following few paragraphs concerning Mr. Arthur Bullard, known, until recently, as Albert Edwards, author of *Comrade Yetta* and *A Man's World.* . . . .

"Since Arthur Bullard began to write about fifteen years ago, his work has been prophetic of the world-wide crisis existing to-day.

"He was born in St. Joseph, Mo., in about 1880"—December 8, 1879. "He came East to school," graduating from the Blair Presbyterian Academy, Blairstown, N. J., 1899, "and to college," Hamilton College, Clinton, N. Y., where he spent about two years. "When about twenty-one he became engrossed in problems of poverty, crime and social justice. In New York he served as a probation officer"—employed by the Prison Association of New York, 1903-6; he was also connected with the University Settlement, where (doubtless) he first became acquainted with Mr. Poole —"and lived for a while on the lower East Side. He never thought of writing at first. He was forced to write by the compulsion of the things he learned in the tenements.

"His novels, *A Man's World* and *Comrade Yetta,* are interesting reading now to one who is trying to

trace back the sources of the class wars raging to-day. His interest in such movements took him to Russia in 1905. With characteristic thoroughness, he spent nearly a year in Switzerland, learning the Russian language—and after that, for two or three years, he spent most of his time in Russia.

"So far, his development was not unlike that of other young American writers. But about ten years ago his interest was led more and more from the struggle between the rich and the poor to the possibilities of war between different nations. This kept him in Europe at least half the time. He was in Turkey and Bulgaria at the time of the Young Turk movement there. He spent much time also in England and France and North Africa. He wrote magazine articles and later a book on the old diplomacy and the first vague signs of the new. Soon after the present war broke out he went to London for some months and after that to Paris. Later he returned to this country convinced that we must enter the war. About eight months later, in June, 1917, he went as correspondent to Russia and remained there for our government until this winter, when severe illness brought him home from Siberia. The book he will write on Russia will doubtless be an immensely valuable piece of work.

"Bullard as a writer has a distinctive quality, especially in his fiction. His novel, *A Man's World,* was regarded here as marking the beginning of a new development in American fiction writing. But significant and forcible as is his work as a writer, Bullard is rather known to his friends for his rare personal

qualities. A man almost constantly traveling from country to country, he delights in mixing with all sorts of people, to talk and to listen. And his talk is so good that now he has innumerable friends in hundreds of big cities, towns and villages all over the world who are always eager to welcome him and to learn what he has picked up since they saw him last. For he is not only a man they like, but one who (they know) is constantly growing, quite unconsciously, and widening and deepening his view of the world's life in these stirring days."

CHAPTER XXXVI

JOSEPH ANTHONY

Hope is not, as a rule, held out to the prodigy, lest he fulfill a promise and so upset the calculations of those who impose their will upon the world by calculating—lest he make of the serious a mockery in the eyes of fools. And Mr. Joseph Anthony is scarce above the age of discretion. 'Twould be indiscreet of him to back up his claim to our attention—limited at present, to one novel—by following *Rekindled Fires* with a suburban tragedy retelling in terms of Summit, N. J., the story of Hedda Gabler.

I do not recall, for the moment, the title of young Keats' first published verse, but I do know that he set no worlds afire the day he launched into print—neither did he disappoint his printer. And when you have said that *Rekindled Fires* is this and that, you have not told the half of all that should be read between the lines. Stanislav Zabransky, pushing a cart laden with fresh vegetables along the streets of Milford, on the edge of the Jersey meadows, is introduced with a humor, not, perhaps, at all unusual, but spontaneous and youthfully charming; and his reading of *The Talisman*—we all remember *The Talisman*—is noted as an echo of that romance that makes of life (to those capable of spelling out their words) a great adventure.

His father, Michael Zabransky, his mother, his sister, his brother, are bodied forth out of reality and pictured with a sympathy which makes of humanity the stuff of dreams.

Stanislav Zabransky, a weaker son, youngest of a family, come from Bohemia to try the promise of America, grows up to become Stanley Zabriskie, an American; and the father's sturdy Bohemian idealism, burning to ash, is rekindled to flame in the last of his children. But *Rekindled Fires* is not, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, a "melting pot" novel. The boy is not made over in America; rather what he might have been had he lived in a less tyrannized Bohemia he becomes among his transplanted people over here. And this is as it should be, for the mere accident of being in America neither makes nor unmakes a man. True enough, environment aids in the development of character; and the soil here is favorable to a natural growth of all that is best and healthiest—but good seed must be planted. Good seed, strong roots, are sometimes brought over from the old world. Too often, I think, the debt we owe to those who dared sever all ties and cross the seas, like folk in a fairy-tale, to seek a fortune here in our half-mythical country is overlooked in lavish praise of those who have merely waited for our homage—rather than brave convention—among the smug comforts of Beacon Street and Charleston, S. C. Because he knows and appreciates the value of the immigrant, because he understands him, sees him with humor and liking, I look to Mr. Joseph Anthony for many good things—books and sealing-wax and, possibly (if he takes to farming),

cabbages. . . . Being a farmer and a reader of Monsieur Anatole France, I am myself inclined to believe that "it is wiser to plant cabbages than to write books"; but Mr. Joseph Anthony must choose for himself.

"My mother," he writes me, "is still mourning the passing of the quiet home district of New York where, in April, 1897, I was born—quiet Pitt Street! My parents were both born in Hungary, but they came dren heard.

"But I have a much more vivid recollection of the fairy tales I read than of the things I saw and heard. Throughout my school days, while my elder brothers, Sidney and Edward, were playing baseball, football, and 'cat,' I was reading—fairy tales (I am not averse to reading them all over again now), Scott, Horatio Alger, Cooper, Henty, Dickens, Mark Twain: one author was about as good as another. By the way, Br'er Ed, who never took books too seriously, has just blossomed out as a playwright; and the bookworm can make him step lively on a tennis court.

"My ambition to write dates from the time when the English teacher in Public School 24 read my first composition and solemnly assured me that 'it runs in the family.' She had had Ed in her class before and we each had a faculty for polysyllabic words that brought joy to her heart. When I graduated P. S. 24 at the age of twelve, I was turned loose to write a valedictorian poem. It was a long poem, but my impression is that there were not very many words in it. At any rate it was never read, for at the last moment

no hall was available for exercises, and the valedictorian was left high and dry.

"At Townsend Harris High School I consoled myself for this loss by joining the Webb Literary Society, where poems and stories were read and criticized of a Friday afternoon by Harrisites of a distinctly tragical bent. I had spent a year and a half at Townsend when my father carried his fur business and family to Hackensack, N. J. When I had partly recovered from the misery of being cut off from my Webb friends, I proceeded to put them into immortal story in the Hackensack High School *Critic* in a serial entitled *The Tale of the Order of Goats,* which I signed 'Jayar.' All the characters of this serial are alive and in evidence, but they have been growing so fast in the last few years that it looks as though there really ought to be a sequel.

"On Graduating H. H. S. in 1913 I began at once to push a typewriter in the joint service of the town Board of Education and the *Bergen News.* Getting 'locals' for the *News* brought me five dollars a week, clerking for the Board eight. Writing poetry for the *News* nothing at all. But when I left the sheet it promptly lay down and died, and it has not been resurrected since.

"I saved enough money to pay for a semester's tuition at Columbia College, and entered in 1914. During the next three years I did nothing at all but go through the Bachelor of Arts course, commute between Hackensack and New York, do some tutoring and a little writing, and act as the travelling representative of a New Jersey chain of business schools. It was while I

was touring northern New Jersey as the apostle of a business education that I came to know the people I told of in *Rekindled Fires.*

"During this time I was a devoted, if delinquent, member of the Boar's Head Literary Society, where Columbia Litterateurs gathered once a fortnight mainly for the inspiration of Professor John Erskine. I still think that there was a conspiracy somewhere to prevent my being a poet. One Boar's Head audience rose as a man to demand that I tell them the subject of a certain serious poem—after I had read them the poem. Professor Erskine, in whose English class I wrote the first four chapters of *Rekindled Fires,* merely smiled and urged me to stick to prose. During my freshman year I sometimes wandered into the precincts of the School of Journalism. There Professor Walter B. Pitkin, the prophet of the west side of the campus, devastated my heart utterly by devoting a whole philosophy lecture to proving the mental inferiority of the race of poets. The next day I nailed this thesis to his chapel door. (I found it on the bulletin board later, with 'More Atrocities from the Trenches' written across it in Professor Pitkin's writing). . . .

The masters of your heart and soul,
  Whose words have set the world aglow,
You think they play a brainy rôle?
  Doc. Pitkin briefly answers: "No."

What poet had an intellect
  Among your Byrons and your Poes?

"Why," says the Prof., "with all respect,
The bum ones only, heaven knows."

As thus I see my ideal smashed,
My loved pursuit held up to scorn,
Do I proclaim my heart is gashed?
Do I don somber black and mourn?

Do I, impelled by mounting ire,
Denounce the world as wholly wrong?
I don't. Suffused with lyric fire,
I burst into this simple song:

"Oh, I am free from cares and fears;
Upon my brow no sorrow reigns;
I know no cares, no sighs, no tears—
I cannot, for I have no brains.

"So let me live, a poet daff,
And when my simple life is done,
Write this upon my epitaph:
'He flunked Philosophy J 1.'"

"After graduating Columbia, I finished *Rekindled Fires*, in the summer of 1917, working at night. I threw up my job, took 'it' to the office of Henry Holt & Co., left it there with the explanation: 'This is a novel,' and went to Newark to look for work. When the acceptance came six weeks later, I was covering the federal round on the Newark *Evening News*.

"As to the future . . . I have lots of plans—if only Uncle Sam will muster me out of the navy!"

CHAPTER XXXVII

OWEN MC MAHON JOHNSON

Elsewhere in this volume Major Rupert Hughes has said of Henry Fielding that "those who read him in his own day took him as a mere entertainer; and now he is a classic! while most of his contemptuous critics are forgotten."

Most of his contemptuous critics are forgotten! Did Major Hughes think to startle me with that sentence? Most men are forgotten, whether critics or novelists, kings or counsellors, priests or paupers—dust unto dust. Why should your critic (whose claims upon attention are, self-confessedly, small) survive the deluge that washes from the sands of time the foot-prints left by other men?

Most of his contemptuous critics! There is much virtue in the phrasing. Most of his contemptuous critics, but not his most contemptuous critic—as Major Hughes himself will, under my gentle suasion, be ready to admit. I am second to none in my love of Henry Fielding—indeed, this book of mine is written all around him—but I must digress to speak of that critic of his; and this because later critics sadly neglect him; and authors conclude that if a critic be allusive or mistaken he must necessarily be forgotten; whereas Richardson. . . .

I find Mr. James Branch Cabell—who makes a pleasant mockery of those who say (with Mr. Harry Leon Wilson) that they cannot read Dickens—speaking of his preference for "the grotesqueries of Micawber and Swiveler and Winkle . . . to a vain dream of having moistened the arid stretches of Clarissa Harlowe's correspondence with the tear of sensibility." But this preference (as he is quick to point out) "does not prove that Dickens is superior in any way to Richardson"; that one is a humorist and the other the first of sentimentalists.

It was Richardson who said that he was unable to read further than the first volume of *Amelia;* as for *Tom Jones,* as early as the year 1750, he audaciously went on record as prophesying that its run was over. This is no faint damning praise—yet *Tom Jones* survives, as a good book is apt to do, praised or condemned. Your critic may help to introduce a book to its waiting audience, or he may advise those who believe in him what not to read—but he can neither make nor break an author. I believe that Richardson will be remembered long after Major Hughes and Mr. Owen Johnson, let us say, are forgotten—and this, not because he is more entertaining, but because he was an innovator. Yet a man may be entertaining and become a classic: the classics are, for the most part, entertaining. As Mr. Owen Johnson is entertaining and already something of a classic.

When *The Humming Bird* appeared in 1910 (with further adventures of Doc McNooder, the Prodigious Hickey, Dick Stover and the Triumphant Egghead in *The Varmint* and *The Tennessee Shad*), it became the

fashion for those motoring between New York and Philadelphia, those motoring between Philadelphia and New York, those motoring through Princeton, to break the journey at Lawrenceville for the purpose of visiting "The Jigger Shop" where Hungry Smeed established the Great Pancake record.

But though Mr. Johnson made his name loved wherever boys read, or men think back to see themselves as never father did, though he took one of his heroes, young Stover, through Yale, he would rather point out that *The Woman Gives*—for it is a "broader field" (so authors think), this turbulent life of twentieth-century New York where *The Salamander* plays with fire, and *Virtuous Wives* acts like the very devil—to be later made beautiful again by the always lovely Miss Anita Stewart.

Mr. Owen Johnson was born in New York City, August 27, 1878, the son of Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson, a poet and for so long editor of the *Century Magazine*. Young Mr. Johnson went to Lawrenceville—'tis pointing out the obvious to say so—and later to Yale, graduating in 1901. He has been three times married, and was the first editor of the Lawrenceville *Literary Magazine*, as well as Chairman of the Yale *Literary Magazine* for the Class of 1900. He is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

In 1901, but a few months out of college, he published *Arrows of the Almighty*, of which I have heard good reports; and four years later *In the Name of Liberty*, now (so I hear) forgotten. Later, having read Balzac, he turned to the seamy side of life in

New York's law offices and pictured their infamy, a shame to all the world, in *Max Fargus.*

And so the tale goes. He has written two plays, *The Comet* and *A Comedy for Wives,* short stories and magazine articles, and *The Sixty-first Second, Murder in Any Degree, Making Money.* He should be famous; he may be satisfied; but I am longing for his return to Lawrenceville.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

JAMES LANE ALLEN

Dr. Johnson, who wrote *The Lives of the Poets,* who referred to Fielding's *Amelia* "as the most pleasing of all romances," and to Fielding himself as a waster, though on occasion an abusive critic, could always distinguish between a man and his work: a good man may write the most tiresome trash—a rogue as wretched as Villon a ballad of immortal worth. And I do not doubt that Mr. Allen, a Kentuckian, growing up when this country was torn with civil strife in the state that gave a president to the North and another to the South, neither wholly of the North nor of the South, rising above party faction, has all the gracious fine manner and nobility of the old school. Yet, though his work has but lately come into a wide recognition of it abroad, I think the best of it, written in his first maturity, has become in this country a part of the past, to influence the elect, to be read at school, but never again to be chattered over in the boudoirs, to be a nine days' wonder.

But the critics and reviewers have always spoiled Mr. Allen; so why should I tell the truth about him? To those who criticized Pope's *Homer,* Dr. Johnson retorted: "To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient—the purpose of a writer is to be read." And

Mr. Allen has been read far and wide through this easy land of ours; he has a place in our literary history.

But I feel myself out of sympathy with him, and for this reason (with small success) have tried to persuade Mr. Hamlin Garland to explain him away. "With regard to Allen," he replied, "I am less certain, although I know him and like him and value his work. He is to be reckoned with in the 'local color' school. His stories of Kentucky are vital parts of the Southern development. He is a stately, somewhat ornate writer, always the fine professor, thoughtful, careful and high-minded. He lacks humor, the marvellous corrective insight which is in Howells, but he is a gallant figure never-the-less. Of late his health has been very poor and we see almost nothing of him. This seems to me a pity for he is a scholarly and charming figure."

"A historical novelist worthy to rank with Nathaniel Hawthorne," Mr. James Lane Allen has been called; and it has even been hinted that "the remarkable success which he achieved in literature was due to the fact that he was born a seventh child." Of late years, however, the general cry has been that he no longer writes as he used to—and that sometimes means that he never did. Complaints are heard on all sides. It is well to remember that Mr. Allen was born (near Lexington, Kentucky) seventy years ago—and that "youth's a staff will not endure." But . . .

"Never," Mr. Hamilton Wright Mabie once said, "never did pioneers carry into a new country a finer blending of the daring which moves the frontier farther from the old centers, and the chivalry of

romance for women and idealization of emotion and experience, than went into the fertile and beautiful Kentucky country in the days which followed Boone's adventurous career, and produced the types of character which appear in James Lane Allen's *The Choir Invisible.* The Blue Grass country found in him a lover who was also an artist" (it is to be remarked, passing, that he now lives in New York) "and the background of his stories is sketched with exquisite skill. *The Kentucky Cardinal, Aftermath,* and the stories in *Flute and Violin* have not been surpassed in beauty of diction in our fiction. If one might venture to predict long life for any contemporary writing, he would not hesitate to put the short stories of these two Southern writers (Mr. Allen and Mr. Thomas Nelson Page) among American classics."

But when a man becomes a classic, he ceases to be read—he must be studied. This is what (to the consternation of all those who love grease paint) has happened to Ibsen—I would beg a reprieve for Mr. Allen, not simply because "*The Choir Invisible* shows the noble love of a married woman for a man who is not her husband," but because of the portrait of the horse-breeder in *The Doctor's Christmas Eve* and for the sake of those who have not yet read *The Kentucky Cardinal* . . . foot-notes would mar the rhythm of the prose.

Mr. Allen can number among his paternal ancestors some of the first settlers of Virginia. One of these ancestors, Richard Allen, moved to Kentucky, where he lived the easy, hospitable life of a country gentleman. Mr. Allen's mother was a descendant of the

Brooks family and of Pennsylvania Scotch-Irish folk. A native of Mississippi, a lover of nature and of literature, she inspired in her son a curiosity concerning the old romances of poetry.

Although but twelve years old, Mr. Allen saw the horror and the suffering brought by the Civil War to the people of the South. The year before his father had lost his fortune; and in the general havoc, Mr. Allen received but little formal education, tutoring under his mother at home. Later, however, he attended the Transylvania University at Lexington, graduating in 1872, and receiving the A.M. degree in 1875.

A little before this his father had died, and Mr. Allen (to meet expenses) spent a year as master of a country school, walking six miles to and from his work. For two years he taught in Missouri and then came back to Kentucky as a private tutor. He was called to Transylvania University, and two years later Bethany College, in West Virginia, offered him the chair of Latin and higher English. For a time he planned going to Germany, but gave up the idea, and, while doing graduate work at Johns Hopkins, about decided to become a doctor of medicine. But his liking for literature led him to take up writing; and in 1884 he moved to New York, arriving there unknown and with no letters of introduction: "he took up his abode in a garret and started out in a very humble way"—sending letters to the New York *Evening Post*, poems to *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, essays to the *Critic* and the *Forum*. It was a review of the late Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady* that first attracted

attention—and soon there was a strong demand for his work. He then moved to Cincinnati, and later to Washington, and back to New York.

His latest volume, a series of fictitious letters, *Emblems of Fidelity*, is (says the New York *Sun*) "bright and interesting—you will enjoy reading it."

CHAPTER XXXIX

SINCLAIR LEWIS

"We only refer to this unpleasant compilation of cool impudence and effrontery to warn our readers against it," said the Dundee *Advertiser,* reviewing Dr. Havelock Ellis' *The New Spirit* early in the Eighteen-Nineties. But long before I ever heard of the Dundee *Advertiser* Dr. Havelock Ellis had become, in some sort, a literary godfather to me. Be warned in time; *The New Spirit,* though vastly more thoughtful, dealing (as it does) with men of prime importance—Diderot, Heine, Whitman, Tolstoy and Ibsen—is still, in many ways, an introduction to this little book of mine. Having been to school to Dr. Ellis, Mr. Shaw, James McNeill Whistler and the inimitable Monsieur France, I am (probably) as unpleasantly impudent as the gayest of my predecessors.

Yet am I anxious to be of service. From our earliest days, as you know, we look out into the world with wide-eyed amazement, trying to discover for ourselves some answer to the riddle of existence. The true significance of life, which is eternal, must of necessity evade our question; and yet, instinctively, we spend a great part of our time searching and probing beneath the surface of things that we may learn of the spirit. "The pulse of life runs fast," says Dr. Ellis. With

trembling fingers we attempt to determine and record, as best we may, its various rhythms.

Upon the stage, and in the stalls quietly watching the drama of our day, a vast and motley crew are gathered. To each his own interpretation of the play. I would not, if I could, impose my own conclusions upon any other. "Conrad," Hugh Walpole has said, "is of the firm and resolute conviction that life is too strong, too clever and too remorseless for the sons of men." My neighbor is of the opinion that it is too easy; men and women for whom he has the utmost contempt succeed beyond the hopes of the most precise. The moral is what you will. For myself I confess that I have as yet heard of no moral: Life is no fable expounded by Æsop. And "learning from experience" means nothing to me; one merely learns about one's self and, in the brief span of "three-score and ten," very little about life.

And that is why it is expedient, now and again, to remind the reader that, failing the resolution to keep silent, your author is merely talking about himself and not, in any real sense, concerning humanity; for you cannot generalize to any purpose concerning mankind from the particular fancy of a momentary mood; you cannot speak for your fellow be you ever so intimate with his life and work.

For this reason I have, so far as is practicable, allowed my novelists to tell of themselves, their ways of work and play, in their own words. And what they have to say is of value because "a large part of one's investigations into the spirit of one's time," as Dr. Ellis has pointed out, "must be made through the

medium of literary personalities. . . . It is the intimate thought and secret emotions of such men that become the common property of after generations. Whenever a great literary personality comes before us, it is our business to divine its fundamental instincts."

Few attain greatness, and yet . . .

"Have you thought of Sinclair Lewis?" Mr. Hergesheimer asked me, January 13, 1919. *"The Job* is worth consideration; O'Brien is reprinting one of his stories in the yearly anthology."

In 1914 Mr. Lewis published his first novel, *Our Mr. Wrenn;* to be followed by *The Trail of the Hawk,* 1915. He is one of those who write, with some regularity, for the *Saturday Evening Post*—and they are, apparently, the most popular of those who write at all. And he has, at intervals, contributed short stories to the *Century, Everybody's,* and the *Metropolitan.* It was not, however, until the publication of *The Job* in 1917 that he came into his own, really made his mark.

"I was born," he writes me, "February 7, 1885, in a Minnesota village, Sauk Center, a genuine prairie town, ringed round with wheat fields broken by slew and oak-rimmed lakes, with the autumn flight of ducks from Canada as its most exotic feature. My boyhood was alarmingly normal, midwestern, American—my father the prosperous pioneer doctor whose diversions were hunting and travel; my school the public school, with no peculiarly inspired teachers; my sports, aside from huge amounts of totally unsystematized reading of everything from dime novels and Ned books

and casual sentimental novels to translations of Homer, were the typical occupations of such a boy: swimming in the creek, hunting rabbits, playing pom-pom-pull-away under the arc light in the evening. There was not much work—a few evening chores, of the wood-box filling sort.

"I don't know how I got the inspiration to go East and become irregular, abnormal, happy, and otherwise literary. But I went to Yale; then for eight years—1907 to 1915—was a literary jack of all trades; newspaper reporter (on the New Haven *Courier and Journal,* San Francisco *Bulletin,* and for the Associated Press), magazine editor (*Transatlantic Tales, Volta Review, Adventure, Publishers' Newspaper Syndicate*), manuscript reader for F. A. Stokes Co. and George H. Doran Co.

"I did get in a few savingly unliterary hikes, however. During college I made two cattleboat trips to England; on one of them landed in England with only fifteen cents, and stayed alive by borrowing three dollars from a fellow cattleman, which lasted till the boat returned. Again I wandered down to Panama, going steerage, returning stowaway, and in between failing to get a job on the Panama railroad. A year and a half I spent in California, part of it reporting, part trying (vainly) to 'free lance,' sharing a bungalow at Carmel with William Rose Benét. And once Allan Updegraff and I shared miserable rooms on the East Side of New York.

"Now, for three years of 'free lancing' as a rather perilously respectable citizen, with a wife and baby, I have combined wandering with being settled down!

In Minneapolis, St. Paul, New York, California, Cape Cod, Florida, we rent furnished houses, and regard the curious ways of new people without sacrificing bathtubs—which are, of course, esthetically and economically, the symbols of civilization.

"As to music and pictures, I am altogether naïve" (he is, you must remember, answering my now long since forgotten questions concerning life and literature). "In authors my preferences are: H. G. Wells, Compton Mackenzie, Joseph Hergesheimer, George Moore, Joseph Conrad, Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters. I am, I suppose, to be technical, a discoordinated radical in politics. For sport I drive a motor car—a thousand miles at a whack—and work."

CHAPTER XL

HERMANN HAGEDORN, JR.

Mr. Hagedorn (born on July 18, 1882) is the author of two novels, *Faces in the Dawn* and *Barbara Picks a Husband,* a man of wit and learning, with (for all his interest in affairs of state) the most inconsequential view of life if one should judge by *Barbara Picks a Husband.* This is the curse of writing novels: you may swear, in a letter to some much-abused critic, that you stand on tip-toe to watch the great world pass in all the trappings of state, that you hear the echo of progression marching outside the window of your room—but you mustn't tell fairy-tales in all seriousness of frivolous girls whose capture is matter to engage the sanest, if you would be believed—you mustn't spin your yarn too fine if you would have us pass it as woof of fate and time, yourself no idle apprentice weaving magic in the sun.

But Mr. Hagedorn is quite right: *The Great Maze* and *The Heart of Youth* are well worth reading—and so is his contribution to my book; I commend it to your attention:—

I was born on Staten Island. I don't know where. I have been told that there were lots of mosquitoes roundabout and I have seen a picture of the house, taken in the manner of the eighties, with people stand-

ing at every window and at every piazza post, or sitting in rockers or on the porch steps. I have always connected that house with a multitude of pleasant people in a graceful position of attention, incredibly young looking people when I considered how old they seemed when I began to know them.

At the age of three weeks or thereabouts I moved to Brooklyn and it was in Brooklyn that I first discovered the terrors of school. I did not like school very much, for my first school was a girls' affair where boys were merely suffered, and my second was a pseudo-military academy, presided over by a Prussian martinet with a scarred face, who wore a flat-topped derby and used to call on my father Sunday nights and keep him up until after midnight, to my father's intense indignation. There were other reasons why I did not like school. My way to it lay through a region where what were known as "micks" abounded; and they kept me in a continual state of terror.

School began to be a delight when I became sixteen and was sent to the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. The Hill opened the world of boys to me, and one or two other worlds, in time. The principal, John Meigs, was, next to Theodore Roosevelt, the most positive personality I have ever known, a man of deep tenderness and extraordinary power, warm-hearted, hot-tempered, indomitable. His wife was known as "Mrs. John"—a torch of a woman with the ability to take a boy's character apart before his eyes to show him how it worked, and to put it together again and hand it back to him as one would a watch—"Now see that you don't let it run down."

It was at the Hill that I felt the first faint impulse to write. There was a school monthly, the *Record,* which seemed very important to those of us who wanted to become editors of it, and we all wrote a great many unspeakably bad things for it. I left the Hill in 1901. The first thing I ever published in what I called a "real" magazine—though it wasn't—was a sentimental allegory in an ephemeral four-by-six pamphlet called *Heart's Yarns.* I remember the hearts all over the white cover. I was office-boy in a wholesale dry goods house after that, an occupation I loathed; then for a few months I attended a business college (my father objected to my handwriting) and spent my time editing the school magazine. A rather violent dose of typhoid span me completely on my base, and I emerged from the hospital with a desire, suddenly developed, to write verse. My father agreed with a sigh that I did not seem fit for business and allowed me to take a position with the *Reader,* a literary monthly which attempted unsuccessfully to compete with the *Bookman.* My salary—ten dollars a week—seemed to me at the time quite tremendous. In dry goods, I had been getting four, with promise, after a year, of a dollar raise.

The *Reader* did not amount to much, but on its staff were a number of men who had come under the influence of Barrett Wendell, George P. Baker and the others of the Harvard group. They pointed out to me that I did not know very much and that what I needed was a year or two at college under these men. The idea seemed sound. I went to Harvard for a year and stayed four. They were quite wonderful

years—years of reading and endless writing and fellowship and discovery. I discovered standards, I discovered people, I discovered the beauty and fascination and terror and ruthlessness of life. I wrote a good many verses and stories, which were published in the *Harvard Monthly* and which won some favor; and ended my college career in a totally unexpected blaze of limelight owing to a class poem called *A Troop of the Guard,* which happened to catch the public.

I went abroad and studied, or pretended to study, one semester at Berlin University; returned to America, married, and settled down as an instructor of English and Comparative Literature at Harvard. I stayed there for two years, but I was not much of a success as a teacher. I was trying to serve two masters, the college and the Muse, with the result that my teaching was half-hearted and my writing academic. I broke away and took my family West. We went to Santa Barbara and settled in a gorgeous spot overlooking the sea, intending to stay a year, or forever. We stayed six months. The place was lotus-land. It was no place for work, not for work that meant something. We returned East and bought a farm in Connecticut. There was nothing lotus-landy about life after that. We found that living on a farm nowadays is an exacting and difficult business. We all learnt what it meant to work; we learnt a great many other things; we saw light on many "literary" misconceptions.

The Great War hit me hard from the start, for brothers of mine were fighting in the armies of Germany. My own neutrality was never such as the

President would have approved; but what there was of it died when the *Lusitania* went down. I hoped the United States would go to war with Germany in 1915. When we did not, and still remained neutral in 1916, I joined with three other men, Julian Street, Porter Emerson Brown and Charles Hanson Towne, in starting the Vigilantes, with the idea of making it a sort of megaphone through which to preach national duty. The war came at last. The Vigilantes did a little something in the waging of the war at home.

I wrote a number of books in these years, plays, poems, novels, propaganda and one volume of biography, a *Boys' Life of Theodore Roosevelt*. The best of these is the one which no one seems to know anything about. It is a narrative in blank verse called *The Great Maze*. It is a modern story, but the names are the names of ancient folk, Agamemnon and Clytæmnestra, Ægisthus and Iphigenia, and so everybody says, "The names are old, so the stuff must be old." It is too bad.

You ask me to write you something that will make me "vivid and real" to your readers. Perhaps some day I will, but it will not be in a letter like this, but in a novel, and your readers won't know it when I've done it. Besides, I am not a very important person and my "preference in salads," concerning which you inquire, will make no dish famous. I have "ambitions," but they are not the sort of ambitions which would be of interest to the general run of folk; there is nothing very splendiferous about them. At present, I am very much more interested in public affairs than I am in books, ancient or modern, my own or any one's

else. I may never write another book; to be a part, even a very small part, of the drama which is unfolding itself from day to day seems at the moment of far more consequence than any book which I am ever likely to write. So, really, I am out of place among "novelists." For I am just a man at a flat-top desk three hundred feet above the ground, staring day after day at a huge map of the United States and wondering how Charlie Jones of Sipes Springs can be persuaded to mould himself and his government "a little nearer to the heart's desire" of Washington and Lincoln and Roosevelt. Some of my friends intimate that I am a lost soul. I let it go at that.

CHAPTER XLI

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

With *Windy McPherson's Son* and *Marching Men,* Mr. Sherwood Anderson has made a name for himself among Americans, for there is style and sincerity, action and thought in his books. They were not written in haste, but patiently and earnestly out of a wide experience—real experience as Mr. Anderson's autobiography shows:

"I was born in 1876 of Scotch-Irish parents, in a little village in Ohio. My mother was tall and gaunt and silent, and after giving birth to seven children—all excepting one now living—died of over-work before reaching the age of forty. By an odd coincidence, the portrait of myself painted by Bill Hollandsworth, that I am using in publicity, is a remarkably good portrait of my mother. This young artist has been able to reach down through the rather commonplace looking, fairly prosperous business man I am, and get a hold of what there is in me of this gaunt woman whose blood is in my veins. The portrait I am sure does not look much like me but the artist has caught in it the very spirit of my mother.

"In our family there were five boys and two girls. A girl died, and when my mother died also, my sister,

who was a few years older than myself, became the housekeeper in our house.

"It was thin housekeeping. My father, a journeyman harness-maker of the old days, was a lovable, improvident fellow, inclined to stretch the truth in statement, loving to swagger before his fellow townsmen, not averse to losing an occasional battle with the demon rum—on the whole, a dear, lovable, colorful, no account, who should have been a novelist himself.

"Lord, but we were poor—too poor. An incident of that time will illustrate how poor we were.

"In our village the boys celebrated Hallowe'en by creeping along the street in the darkness and throwing heads of cabbages against the doors of the houses. If no one paid any attention to them, they went on their way, but if an irate housekeeper came out of the house and ran after them, they returned again and again to the charge.

"My mother, knowing this, took advantage of it. You get a sense of her tall, gaunt figure crouching in the darkness waiting for the boys. When they had thrown the cabbages, she pursued them. The game was sometimes kept up for hours and my mother acquired by this method twenty-five or thirty cabbages on which we were fed for the next month.

"All of this, as you may suppose, gave me an almost overweening respect for cash. As early as I can remember, I was on the streets of our town, sweeping out stores, mowing the lawns before houses, selling newspapers, taking care of horses belonging to families where there were no men, selling pop-corn and peanuts

to the crowds on Saturday afternoon—perpetually busy. I became known in the town as 'Jobby' Anderson, because of my keenness for any job that presented itself. As the result of this method, I soon had money jingling in my pocket, although I had no time to go to school. What education I got was picked up in the bar rooms, the stores, and on the street, and by the grace of certain lovable characters in our place who took me in hand, loaned me books, and talked to me through the evening about the old poets and story tellers.

"When I was sixteen or seventeen years old, I came to the city of Chicago and there made the most serious mistake of my life. For four or five years I worked as a common laborer and got myself caught in that vicious circle of things where a man cannot swagger before his fellows, is too tired to think, and too pitifully ashamed of his appearance to push out into the world.

"The Spanish War saved me from this. I enlisted, frankly not through patriotism—but in order to get out of my situation. To my amazement, when I went home to my home town to become a soldier, I was greeted as a hero—one who had given up a lucrative position in the city in order to fight for his country. My natural shrewdness led me to take advantage of this situation, and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

"The rest of my story is a very simple one. When I came back from the war, I got into the advertising business, and have been a writer of advertising ever since excepting for a few years when I attempted to become a manufacturer and made a failure of it. The

advertising business is one that lends itself peculiarly to what I wanted to do in life. I do not understand why more novelists do not go into it. It is all quite simple. You are to write advertisements for one who puts tomatoes in cans. You imagine yourself a canner of tomatoes. You become enthusiastic about the tomato. You are an actor given a rôle to play and you play it.

"There is an idea abroad that to do this one must become in fact a canner of tomatoes, but it is as absurd to say this as to say that the actor who plays King Lear must necessarily go about choking women to death.

"The impulse that led me to write novels was the impulse for my own salvation. I did not want to become in reality the canner of tomatoes. There was in me a good deal of my father's swagger and pretentiousness. At the time I wrote my first novel I was just failing in my manufacturing adventure, and losing a good deal of money for my personal friends. I worried about the matter. I found myself in the pitiful position of so many business men and thought it not unlikely that at forty I would be an irritable, nervous wreck, spending my time protesting against the unfairness of life.

"One day I sat down and began to write a novel. I liked it. To my amazement, I found that on paper I was entirely honest and sincere—a really likable, clear-headed decent fellow. At once, I knew that I would write novels the rest of my life, and I certainly shall.

"In the beginning it was my dream that I would write during my life perhaps ten or fifteen novels

without publishing any of them. I do not want to be a novelist, although I want to write novels. I do not want a myth built up about me. It struck me as a bully adventure to spend my life writing novels and have them published only after my death.

"I have changed my mind about this only because it may be possible that my novels will make me some money and I want the money.

"To be sure, there is an impulse back of my novel writing. It is, however, an impulse that one cannot discuss. To talk of it would be like discussing before casual acquaintances the character of the woman one loves."

CHAPTER XLII

GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON

There are novelists and novelists—the severer artists: Turgenieff, Meredith, Flaubert; and those who are primarily story-tellers: Marion Crawford, Scott, the wanton Gyp. They are poles apart; and yet they differ from Mr. Kipling's *East and West* in that the twain do meet.

After a luncheon, some ten or twelve years ago, given at the Savage Club in London to Mr. McCutcheon by Mr. Clement K. Shorter, editor of the *Sphere* and author of *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle,* Mr. Thomas Hardy took Mr. McCutcheon bus-riding to view some paintings at the Guildhall, and then, since Mr. McCutcheon's afternoon was free, by another bus out to Hampstead. Great men are simple and unaffected in their simplicity—and lesser men, recognizing their greatness, look back with proud pleasure on every chance encounter with them. So one remembers passing Lincoln on the street—one who may possibly forget the boy with whom he fought at school. And there is much of this simplicity (learned of the great, I doubt not) in Mr. McCutcheon, a very successful maker of novels.

Mr. McCutcheon was born, July 26, 1866, on a farm near Lafayette, in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. His

father was a drover, born in Kentucky, of Scotch descent, and of native Virginia stock. His mother, though born in Ohio and raised on an Indiana farm, near the Wabash, was Pennsylvania Dutch. Certain of Mr. McCutcheon's earliest memories center about the cattle, sheep, hogs, bought up in the country round about and waiting shipment in his father's fields. But at about ten he moved with the family to Lafayette, a city of thirty thousand, older than Chicago, where his father went into the banking and brokerage business, was elected sheriff, serving four years, and died as county treasurer—a Democrat in a three-to-one Republican district. Mr. McCutcheon comes of a family used to success. His sister, Mrs. Raleigh, who began a few years ago making the Good Fairy statuettes, now runs a huge factory manufacturing the Raleigh dolls. His brother Ben heads the Liberty Loan Publicity for Chicago. And John T. is one of the great war correspondents, a lion-hunter, and perhaps the ablest of newspaper cartoonists.

Mr. McCutcheon was educated at Purdue University. In the summer of 1882, between his freshman and sophomore years, he joined C. P. Hormig's Comedy Company, playing juvenile leads under the name of George M. Clifford. He had been born stage-struck. In earliest youth he had written plays more terrible than Penrod's, meaningless plays ranting heroics. But he walked and beat his way home, with no money, from the summer of tent-storming (for they played under canvas) and so was partially cured—the staging of *Graustark*, his first novel, completing the process.

Graustark, the title a happy accident—as Keats knew, the "magic hand of chance" points towards that fairy world where romance waits—was written between December and March, 1898-9, while Mr. McCutcheon was city editor of the Lafayette *Courier* and sold for $500.00 . . . a bargain that might have proved tragical had no successor to that mythical sword-slashing tale proved a success. But *The Sherrods,* which deals with Indiana farmer-folk and is Mr. McCutcheon's favorite among his books, was well received . . . and *Nedra* and *The Day of the Dog,* which had its beginnings in a dream.

Then came *Brewster's Millions.* Mr. McCutcheon, no longer a newspaper man, was riding in a street car with his brother Ben when they passed a row of billboards, advertising I forget what. "They are spending millions," said Ben. And they fell to talking about it. "And supposing you had a million, how would you spend it?" And the plot of the novel presented itself. But the spending—not investing nor dissipating—of the million was not so easy. However, the book—extremely clever—was written and turned over to Stone and brought out over the name of Richard Greaves, because Dodd, Mead were at the time publishing another of Mr. McCutcheon's tales and because Mr. McCutcheon did not figure his name worth a great deal—had, in fact, bet Mr. Stone a hundred dollars that Greaves was as good a name as McCutcheon. He was proved right in the event, for *Brewster's Millions* outsold his other book.

Then there were the later Graustarks—*Beverly* and

the rest. And *The Rose and the Ring,* in 1910, a circus story preparatory to which Mr. McCutcheon joined Wallace's Circus, travelling as the guest of the manager, coming to admire and immensely like the circus people. And *The Hollow of Her Hand,* which tells of a man of family murdered in a roadhouse by a girl whom he thought to seduce, of his wife who hurries out there when notified and meets up with the girl wandering on the road, brings her home, and in vengeance on the man who had wronged them both, forces his family to—a readable book. And *Mr. Bingle,* an elderly bank clerk, and his wife, who suddenly come into money and every year (since they are childless) adopt a boy or girl, who lose their money when other heirs prove previous claims, whose children are taken away by humane societies, and who——

Mr. McCutcheon is primarily a story-teller, influenced (as he confesses) by Dickens, a collector of first-editions, one who delights in Corot and Ranger, and is not deep in any problems that could not interest those who seek a new and more romantic world in their reading.

Mr. McCutcheon's Works Include:

Graustark, Castle Craneycrow, The Sherrods, Brewster's Millions, The Day of the Dog, Beverly of Graustark, Nedra, Purple Parasol, Cowardice Court, Jane Cable, The Flyers, The Daughter of Anderson Crow, The Husbands of Edith, The Man from Brodney's, The Alternative, Truxton King, The Butterfly Man, The Rose in the Ring, What's-His-Name, Many Mid-

thorne, Her Weight in Gold, The Hollow of Her Hand, A Fool and His Money, Black Is White, The Price of Graustark, Mr. Bingle, From the House Tops, The Light That Lies, Green Fancy.

CHAPTER XLIII

ZANE GREY

Of the so-called "popular" American novelists, none holds a higher place than Zane Grey. As hunter, fisherman and explorer, his writings first began to attract notice in *Field and Stream* and with his *Roping Lions in the Grand Canyon,* which first appeared in this periodical during 1908, he established himself as one of the foremost descriptive writers in this country —for Zane Grey possesses an ability to write description that is crowned with exciting incident. His stories are of horsemen, plainsmen, and their like.

Mr. Warren H. Miller, editor of *Field and Stream,* contributes the following interesting notes on Zane Grey:

"After a few contributions on black bass angling on the Delaware, which was at that time one of Grey's amusements, he came to us with the serial, *Down an Unknown Jungle River,* a breathless narrative of an exploring trip down a Mexican river that Zane Grey had once noted from the train in one of his travels. Where it led or whether it was even navigable no one knew, but the fact that it swept downward towards the sea through a trackless mountainous Mexican jungle was enough for Zane Grey—he would go down it forthwith! And it gave him the material for a

wonderful story; jaguar, puma, deer and peccary hunting, fishing where no fish caught turned out to be anything like he had ever seen before; wildfowl shooting of new and strange birds. Added to this the hazards of the river, working the boat down over series of ledges against which there would be no turning back, getting lost where the river wound under almost subterranean tropical jungles, adventures with poisonous snakes of every kind, and, finally fighting tropical fever in his small expeditionary force—such was the thrilling tale that made up the chapters of *Down an Unknown Jungle River.*

"Followed more contributions on fishing, particularly the great game fish of the Atlantic coast, the tuna, of which Zane Grey landed one large enough to take a prize in our National Fishing Contest, and then he came to us with a new serial. It was not surprising that a man who could write like Zane Grey would soon turn his hand to fiction, and the story he brought us was just the kind that *Field and Stream* men want when they consent to read an outdoor novel—a western story by a man who has been west of Brooklyn, who knows the men and the country, and writes so that the old-timers recognize what he puts into his story as true local color. *Riders of the Purple Sage* was the name of this serial, to our mind one of the best and truest things he has ever done. During 1913 that was the principal contribution from his pen that we published. About this time Zane Grey began to incline more and more to the sport of angling for the big game fish of tropical waters. A trip to Mexico, again after jaguar, having been cut short by the revolution in that

country, he landed at Long Key where he was initiated into the wonderful fishing for barracoota, tarpon, swordfish, and sailfish that are the principal game in those waters. Soon our pages were brightened by his fishing stories, told in the same vivid style, and with the same ability to make the reader see the local surroundings that characterized his hunting stories when roping lions in Colorado.

"Then followed a second serial, a novel that always appeals to our people, a novel of the arid desert region around Pinacate. *Desert Gold* was the name of the romance staged in these weird surroundings, and again Grey presented as true a picture of the country as one will find, even in such a purely narrative and descriptive work as Hornaday's *Camp Fires in the Desert and Lava,* written after a trip through the same country hunting for mountain sheep.

"After a period of silence, so far as sending any messages to the outdoor world was concerned, Zane Grey again commenced writing sportsman's articles for us. While gathering material for his later novels, which have occupied his time exclusively, nevertheless, he was able to get much sport in the countries visited, as, when not at work, Zane Grey's play is the life of the all-around sportsman. A hunting trip for puma in Colorado, a spell at Catalina fishing for the leaping tuna and the swordfish, all resulted in stories for sportsmen, relished the more keenly because told by a master in literature. While our people have little patience with the author who attempts to write on the outdoors when he himself is not a true, tried and experienced sportsman, we accept Zane Grey as capable

of holding his own with the best of us in the world of outdoor sport, regardless of his abilities as a writer. And no higher praise could be tendered any one by the sportsmen themselves than to regard him as an 'old-timer'—one of themselves. Such, gentlemen, is Zane Grey!"

Zane Grey was born in Zanesville, Ohio. His father was a backwoodsman, hunter and farmer in his earlier days, and later became a doctor. His mother was a direct descendant of the famous frontier Zanes, and there is Indian blood flowing in the veins of the Zanes. Educated in Zanesville High School and at the University of Pennsylvania, young Grey always was fond of books, and it was natural that his inclination ran toward Cooper and Scott. But he preferred swimming and fishing and hunting to school or work. He played amateur, college and professional baseball, was a member of the famous Orange Athletic Club of East Orange, New Jersey, and finally became a professional ball player on the Newark Eastern League team, Findlay Tri-State League, and Jackson Michigan League. Zane Grey's parents, however, persuaded him not to go into major league baseball, so he hunted and fished in Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Lower California, Mexico, Yucatan, West Indies and Canada. He canoed down many rivers, sought the black sea-bass and tuna at Catalina Island and off Coronada in the Pacific. The jungle country of Terra Caliento of Mexico lured him, as did the coast of Yucatan and the Grand Canyon country.

Zane Grey has made a name second to none as a writer of outdoor romance and his books include:

The Desert of Wheat, The U. P. Trail, The Border Legion, The Heritage of the Desert, Ken Ward in the Jungle, The Light of Western Stars, The Lone Star Ranger, The Rainbow Trail, Riders of the Purple Sage, Wildfire, The Young Lion Hunter, The Young Forester, The Young Pitcher, Desert Gold.

H. W. C.

CHAPTER XLIV

THOMAS DIXON

With the appearance of *Leopard Spots* about fifteen years ago, the powers of Thomas Dixon as an American author to be considered, seized the American reading public, and grew steadily with increased vigor in *The One Woman, The Clansman, The Traitor, Comrades,* and *The Root of Evil.*

Mr. Dixon, the son of a prominent Baptist clergyman of old Revolutionary stock, was born in Cleveland County, North Carolina, January 11, 1864. During his childhood spent on a Southern farm in the midst of the magnetic romanticism of the land of the magnolia—in the very throes of a tremendous conflict between the black and the white—he seems to have been gleaning much with which he has given charm to the stirring picture of *Dan Norton.* At the age of nineteen he was graduated from Wake Forest College, of his native State, with a scholarship admitting him as a special student in history and politics at Johns Hopkins University. In '84, the following year, he became a law student at Greensboro Law School, North Carolina; and in '86, at the age of twenty-two, was admitted not only to the State and to the United States district courts of North Carolina, but to the

bar of the United States Supreme Court at Washington.

Even at twenty this amazing young man had been elected to the North Carolina Legislature. For two years during his rapid and brilliant career as a law student, he was actively engaged in State politics and at twenty-three had become a lawyer of note, having appeared in two famous murder cases of the day.

But in October, 1886, Dixon gave up his work in this field and entered the ministry as pastor of the Baptist Church in Raleigh, from which he accepted a call to Boston and later to the People's Temple, New York City. A few months before this he had been married to Miss Harriet Bussey of Montgomery, Alabama.

For twelve years, until 1899, Dixon's great originality, freedom of expression, fascinating address, and forcefulness in the pulpit drew by far the largest audiences in the Protestant congregation of Boston and New York. As a minister, independent, assertive, strong in his faith and unhampered by custom, it is said he was not averse to indulging in things supposedly unclerical, such as going a-hunting with a gun. Many of his most stirring sermons appear in the books which he compiled before leaving New York—*Living Problems in Religion and Social Science* (1891), *What is Religion?* (1902), *Sermons on Ingersoll* (1894), and *The Failure of Protestantism in New York* (1897).

Meanwhile, Dixon's meteoric success as a lawyer and legislator, his power in the pulpit, his brilliancy as a public lecturer, evidences of the marvelous capac-

ity of the man, were but steps in the development of the future novelist. For real success he looked forward to the literary and waited deliberately until almost his fortieth year to write his first book of fiction.

Then from the fullness of his varied and unique experience, from years of patient study of the great racial tragedy of the South, from the strength of his endeavor to reveal this intense situation in its true light to the millions whose sole idea of the negro is vested in Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom,* came a series of striking tales of American life.

Mr. Dixon then struck a new note with his two great novels of the Civil War—*The Southerner,* a story of Abraham Lincoln, and *The Victim,* a story of Robert E. Lee. These books were even more successful than his earlier volumes, and *The Southerner* has been proclaimed by many competent critics one of the best novels of the Civil War that has been written.

About this time also Mr. Dixon's previous novel, *The Clansman,* was produced in motion pictures under the title of *The Birth of a Nation* and achieved the greatest success which has ever come to any photoplay.

Dixon's next novel was called *The Foolish Virgin.* It is a powerful study of an unsophisticated girl who is tricked into marriage with a thief.

This was followed by a novel called *The Fall of a Nation,* which was written in connection with his great motion picture production of the same name. This story was the means of arousing hundreds of thousands of Americans to great outbursts of patriotism. With all the fervor and thrills that characterized *The Birth of a Nation,* Mr. Dixon here tells the story of

the invasion of the United States by a powerful European nation.

Mr. Dixon's latest novel, just published, is called *The Way of a Man.* It is the story of the type of the ultra-modern woman who believes that woman has now reached a place where marriage may be safely ignored.

H. W. C.

CHAPTER XLV

BASIL KING

The Americanization of William Benjamin Basil King gives this popular writer, born in Charlottestown, Prince Edward Isle, 1859, his rights to inclusion in this volume. Basil King, as he is popularly known, was educated at Canadian schools and at Kings College, Windsor, Canada. His wife is an American. Mr. King is an Episcopal clergyman and was for some time rector of Christ Church, Cambridge, Mass. He has lived in Boston and Cambridge since he returned from Europe, where he spent a number of years in France and Germany. His novel, *Let No Man Put Asunder,* was published in 1901; and after that followed *In the Garden of Charity, The Steps of Honor, The Giant's Strength.* In 1908—let Mr. King tell the story in his own words—"Harper's wanted my book, *The Inner Shrine,* to publish as a serial, but up to that time they had never taken a serial except from the very best authors. After they had taken the works of Thomas Hardy, Gilbert Parker, and Mrs. Deland, it can readily be seen that hesitation on their part to feature a serial for the coming year by a man who was practically unknown was natural. It was suggested that my novel be run serially, but anonymously. At that time I was very ill, I was losing my sight rapidly,

and when the publishers suggested that the story should be printed anonymously, I jumped at the idea, for the simple reason that this would allow me to pass along unmolested. I was going abroad to remain two years. I was so ill I took no particular interest in the serial when it was published, and, as a matter of fact, I did not know at the time that it had aroused any curiosity. I had very little communication with the United States during the first year of my stay abroad. *The Wild Olive* and *The Street Called Straight* were published anonymously, too, though as 'by the author of *The Inner Shrine,*' but now the authorship of them is everybody's secret, in a way. I don't mind. Naturally, it would be foolish to keep up my anonymity any longer, though I should have been glad to do so."

Later novels are *The Lifted Veil* and *The High Heart, The Side of the Angels, The Steps of Honor, The Way Home, Abraham's Bosom,* and *The City of Comrades.*

H. W. C.

CHAPTER XLVI

PETER B. KYNE

"Peter B. Kyne is one of those dependable mortals —one of those who can be depended upon always to turn out a good job, quite according to specifications. So it is that the reader, running over the titles in a book store, comes to a volume with Kyne's name on it, and buys it, confident that it may not be an epoch-making story, may not carry any extraordinary message, may not excite long, windy and more or less intelligent debate in the literary circles, but that it will, without question of a doubt, be a good story and well told. Kyne has the good sense to write about things he understands clearly and the lumber trade is one of them. He has the rare ability to see his characters as flesh and blood people and he has the trick, possessed by all too few, of putting these characters, still alive and human, into white paper and ink." In this fashion does the *Brooklyn Eagle* describe the writings of Peter B. Kyne, who has sometimes been called the New Jack London.

It was by his *Cappy Ricks* stories that Peter B. Kyne established himself with the thousands of readers of the *Saturday Evening Post,* and while these were put into book form at a later date, he deserted this popular character for new ones, and a different theme, in *Webster, Man's Man.* From the philosophic adventurer

type of Cappy Ricks, Mr. Kyne went to a typical Jack London person in his John Stewart Webster, mining engineer, who dipped into South American revolutions and participated in "high adventure" that captures the lover of the five-reel thriller.

Dr. Charles H. Shinn finds in Kyne's latest book, *The Valley of the Giants,* the best work he has so far done. Here Mr. Kyne selects the humble county coast of California, and a plot not unlike *Webster, Man's Man.*

Peter B. Kyne was born on a ranch in California in 1880. He served in the Philippines in '98, and recently as a captain in the 144th Coast Artillery. Prior to his recognition as a full-fledged author, he has been a newspaper man, a lumber man, a railroad man, and a miner.

Doubleday, Page & Company recently acquired the rights to Mr. Kyne's earlier books, *The Long Chance* and *Cappy Ricks.*

During his stay in France, Captain Kyne adopted a little French boy, which inspired the following lines in the Chicago *Sunday Tribune*:

Capt. Peter B. Kyne,
The father of "Cappy Ricks,"
Is now a pa
To an "oo-la-la"
Whose age is almost six.

"It's this way: Capt. Kyne found a little French boy whose father had been killed and whose mother had died and who had absolutely no one to care for him. Cappy Kyne adopted him, and when he came home he brought his new son with him." H. W. C.

CHAPTER XLVII

EDGAR WATSON HOWE

Ed Howe, as he is everywhere called, was born at Treaty, Indiana, May 3, 1854, the son of Henry and Elizabeth (Irwin) Howe. Shortly thereafter his family moved to Missouri where he obtained a common school education. At twelve years of age he entered a printing office, and at nineteen started publishing the *Golden Globe,* at Golden, Colorado; at twenty-one he married Clara L. Frank, of Falls City, Nebraska; at twenty-three he became editor and proprietor of the Atchison *Daily Globe,* of Atchison, Kansas, which he continued to publish until 1911; and on January 1, 1911, he brought out the first number of *E. W. Howe's Monthly.* He has also written some nineteen volumes of travel, biography, philosophy and short stories. He is an exceedingly acute, shrewd small-town person, well known to the judicious for his *Country Town Sayings;* but . . .

"Ed Howe is in Europe," I was informed when I went in search of material for this essay. I decided that Ed Howe, though undoubtedly interesting, must be consigned to that oblivion where I leave all those who refuse to answer my letters. Then, in the *Literary Digest* for March 8, 1919, I came upon Mr. Howe arguing with Frank Harris, editor of *Pearson's,*

concerning the relative merits of those who write and those who build their houses, for comfort and convenience, beside the sands of the sea. . . .

"To assert that, because a man has cleverness as a writer, he is one of the world's great men, is," says Mr. Howe, "an absurd doctrine. I know it is accepted by writers, but it is certainly nonsense. And I will go further (attend me closely) and say that Shakespeare was not the greatest Englishman."

Ed Howe (attend him closely!) grows exceeding rash, *n'est-ce pas?* But we must quote him at length to prove the worth of his thinking, and so of himself and his books.

"Shakespeare," according to Mr. Howe, "was born with an ability to write, precisely, as a hen is born with an ability to lay a certain number of eggs" . . . and "there are half a dozen Englishmen living to-day who are greater than Shakespeare; who acquired greatness by hard and patient work, which Shakespeare never did; it came to him in a flash, and he deserved no credit for it."

You will notice that Mr. Howe is proving his points by citing Shakespeare who is dead and therefore an easy adversary; you will also notice that he does not name his "half a dozen Englishmen"; and you may be sure that he can point to no "hard and patient work" equaling the titanic effort required to produce, in rapid succession, *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, A Winter's Tale, The Tempest.* Indeed the strain of merely playing *Hamlet* or *Lear* equals in power the work of "half a dozen Englishmen," and is beyond the strength of all but two or

three. And as for deserving credit—Mr. Howe would credit a half dozen nameless Englishmen who have helped to build up an Empire that Germany or France or these United States can at any moment threaten, who have assembled a wealth of gold and silver that may be eaten by rust, destroyed by fire, who move among flattering sycophants like school girls at a village dance, yet would deny it to one who asked of posterity not so much as the remembrance of his name, whose plays are credited to another, who gave, in return for the begrudged quiet of the grave,—men quarrel through the centuries across his resting place—Beatrice and Rosalind and Viola, the wit and beauty of Portia, the loveliness of Imogen, the mirth of Falstaff.

But Mr. Howe says that "his greatness was not of a useful kind, whereas the greatness of many other Englishmen has been of much use to the world."

They have built railroads, mammoth liners plying across the seven seas, given us to eat and drink: Shakespeare has supplied only that food by which the spirit lives—not bread. "What shall it profit a man," Christ asked, "if he win the whole world and lose his own soul?" But Mr. Howe believes that the man who increases the creature comforts of his fellows is of more use to the world than the man like Shakespeare or the prophet like Christ, who merely saves a soul from utter material degradation. Mr. Howe prefers electric lights to *Twelfth Night;* I do without electric lights and find the *Sonnets* very useful in keeping alive my faith in humanity.

"They are mere entertainers, as are strolling players,

circus performers and musicians . . ." says Mr. Howe of those who write.

To be kind, I take it that Mr. Howe is a little mad—and not, as he would have us believe, talking in all earnestness of Isaiah and Dante, St. John the Divine and old Sir Thomas Browne.

"Do we, the people, get our morals from the writers?" he asks; and answers, "Certainly not; so far as writers teach morals, they get their ideas from the people."

As is proved by the imprisonment of St. Paul, a writer, made popular because he taught the ideas of the people; as is proved by the crucifixion of Christ. Like Prodicos, like Anaxagoras, like Socrates, Euripides held concerning the old gods of Greece opinions that were contrary to the ancient maxims of the city of Athens. Everything in him betrayed contempt for the divine and heroic conceptions of Hellas. His was the modern spirit, something sceptical of fairy-tales. At last it became necessary that he flee the city. He went to seek under a tyrant that liberty of thought which democracy denied him. He died in the royal house of Archelaus. . . .

But of all this, as of Shakespeare, Mr. Howe is ignorant, for "what," as he says, "is writing but a record of human events?" What indeed is Homer but just that—the history of the Fall of Ilium as it was duly encompassed by the Greeks? And the truth of the fable of Don Quixote is attested by the passing of an out-grown, ridiculous chivalry.

"What is written philosophy," Mr. Howe continues, "but the teaching of our oldest and best men?"

Though where these "oldest and best men" learned what they teach, if not from the philosophers, Mr. Howe does not tell us. It appears that "our oldest and best men" are capable of thinking things out, and that philosophers, having no such capabilities, hearing the "oldest and best" talk, steal their thoughts and write them down, and so win an unearned fame. But Mr. Howe, doubtless one of the "oldest and best," angry with such impostors, tired of their malfeasance, swears that . . .

"The teachings of Socrates are nothing save the best teachings of those with whom he associated; I have read his philosophy"—meaning, of course, that he has read Plato—"and it imprest me not as new doctrine, but as a simple repetition of what I have heard from the best of my associates all my life."

Unconsciously Mr. Howe bears witness to the slow but sure potency of the written word. After twenty-four centuries the teachings of Socrates have reached and become the common thought of those with whom Mr. Howe associates; after twenty-four centuries his doctrine appears as nothing new to Kansas but the simple and self-evident truth. This speaks volumes for the wisdom of Socrates who, with his life, paid for an unshakeable faith in those doctrines twenty-four centuries before Mr. Howe ever heard of them. Because Socrates alone in his day (with no associates!) knew them to be true he was forced to drink the hemlock. It was hoped that with his death they would be disproved . . . or forgotten . . . and now they crop up in Kansas! Can nothing be done to stifle the teachings of this man Socrates?

Mr. Howe closes his thoughtful arraignment of those who write with yet another question. He seems tireless, a catechist after the heart of those who know their catechism, one so sure of our answers that he does not even wait to hear them.

"Did Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Whitman, or Buddha, or Tolstoy, or Confucius, or Rosseau, teach you as important lessons as you learned from your parents?"

And so he leaves us, turning abruptly away. But . . .

And I mean no disrespect to my parents. Pray do not misunderstand. Yet the answer is most certainly, Shakespeare taught me vastly more than ever my father did—indeed, it was out of the mouth of Shakespeare that I was often able to refute my father, to make him, as one of "the oldest and best," see the light as I, one in love with Juliet, saw it in my teens. Without Shakespeare (and Goethe and Whitman, etc.) we should probably be no wiser than is Mr. Howe.

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